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RUSSIA:

ITS

RISE AND PROGRESS, TRAGEDIES AND REVOLUTIONS.

88246

BY

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F.R.G.S.

LONDON:
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1856.

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NOTE.

I HAVE attempted in this volume to preserve the thread of Russian history, omitting what is uninteresting or unimportant, and dwelling only upon leading incidents, so as to give a definite view of the general fortunes of the empire, and of the more remarkable chapters. The "Tragedy of the Princess Tarrakanof" has appeared in the Leisure Hour, and by reprint in the Morning Advertiser. It is possibly apocryphal in some of its details, but the substance of the narrative is sustained by the authority of Castera, Tooke, Lyell, Bell, and the late lamented Count Krasinski.

In another volume — "Nicholas and the Caucasus: the Mountains, the Tribes, and the Wars," — I propose to notice the reign of the late czar, and complete a general view of the history and policy of Russia.

Brixton, December 28. 1855.

SUCCESSION

OF

THE SOVEREIGNS OF RUSSIA, GRAND PRINCES OR GRAND-DUKES, CZARS, AND AFTERWARDS EMPERORS.

I. House of Rurik.

1. *At Novgorod.*

	A.M.	A.D.
Rurik	6369	861

2. *At Kiev.*

Igor, his son, at first under the regency of his uncle Oleg	6386	878
Sviatoslaf, son, first under the regency of his mother, Olga, who embraced Christianity	6453	945
Yaropolk, son of the grand-prince	6480	972
Vladimir, brother, first Christian prince	6488	980
Yaroslaf, son of the grand-prince at Kiev: his brothers have appanages: thence the different principalities or dukedoms	6523	1015
Isiaslaf, son	6562	1054
Vsevolod, brother	6586	1078
Sviatopolk, son of the grand-duke Isiaslaf	6601	1093
Vladimir II., brother of Vsevolod	6622	1114
Mstislaf, son	6633	1125
Yaropolk, brother	6640	1132
Viatcheslaf, brother, abdicates	6646	1138
Vsevolod II., great grandson of the grand-prince Yaroslaf	——	——
Isiaslaf II., son of Mstislaf	6654	1146
Rostislaf, brother of Vsevolod II.	6662	1154
Isiaslaf III., son of David, and great grandson of Yaroslaf	——	——
Youri, or Igor, or George, forth son of Vladimir II. He built Moscow	6663	1155

3. *At Vladimir.*

Michael, son, governs with his brother Andrew, and after his death alone	6665	1157
Vsevolod III., brother	6685	1177
Igor, or George II., son. Constantine, his brother, during two years	6721	1213
Yaroslaf II., brother, in subjection to the Tatars, as also the following	6746	1238
St. Alexander Nevsky, son	6753	1245
Yaroslaf III., brother	6771	1263
Vassili, or Basil, brother	6778	1270

	A. M.	A. D.
Dmitri, or Demetrius, brother. His brother Andrew set up by the Tatars	6785	1277
Daniel, fourth brother	6802	1294
Igor, or George, son, deposed	6810	1302
Michael, son of Yaroslaf III.	6813	1305
Vasili, or Basil II., brother	6828	1320
Igor re-established	6833	1325
4. At Moscow.		
Ivan I., brother, surnamed Kalita	6836	1328
Simeon, son	6848	1340
Ivan II., brother	6861	1353
Dmitri II., son. Dmitri, his relation, set up by the Tatars, two years	6867	1359
Vassili, or Basil III., son	6897	1389
Vassili IV., son. Igor, his uncle, usurps	6933	1425
Ivan III., son. The famous Ivan Vassilievitch, who threw off the yoke of the Tatars	6970	1462
Vassili V., son	7014	1506
Ivan IV., son, surnamed the Terrible	7042	1534
Feodor, Theodore, or son; the last of the race of Rurik	7092	1584
II. Various Families.		
Boris Godunof	7106	1598
Feodor II., son	7113	1605
Dmitri V., falsely calling himself son of Ivan IV.	——	——
Vassili Shuiski, or Basil VI., elected	7114	1606
Vladislaus of Poland elected, afterwards rejected	7118	1610
III. House of Romanoff.		
Michael, elected	7121	1613
Alexey, or Alexis, son	7153	1645
Feodor, or Theodore III., son	7184	1676
Ivan V. and Peter I. brothers, together	7190	1682
Peter I., alone	7204	1696
Russians cease to reckon by the year of the world.		
Catherine, widow of Peter I.		1725
Peter II., grandson of Peter I.		1727
Anne, daughter of Ivan		1730
Ivan VI., grandson of Ivan		1740
Elizabeth Petrovna, daughter of Peter I.		1741
Peter III., her nephew, deposed and murdered		1762
Catherine II., his widow		1762
Paul, son of Peter III., murdered		1796
Alexander I., son of Paul		1801
Nicholas, son of Paul		1825
Alexander II., son of Nicholas		1855

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RUSSIA.

CHAPTER I.

PAGANISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND CANONISATION.

THE SCLAVES. — THEIR MYTHOLOGY. — LEGENDS OF ST. ANDREW AND ST. ANTHONY. — INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY. — METHODIUS AND CYRIL. — RISE OF THE RUSSIAN MONARCHY. — THE IMPLACABLE OLGA. — HER BAPTISM. — VLADIMIR I. — HIS CAPTURE OF CHERSON. — TREATMENT OF PERUNE. — ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY. — VLADIMIR MONOMACHUS. — ST. ALEXANDER NEVSKI. — HIS MONASTERY. — CATACOMBS OF KIEV. — HONOURS TO THE CANONISED. — PICTURES OF SAINTS. — ORDER OF THE DAY AT SEBASTOPOL. — RUSSIAN AND FOREIGN SAINTS.

THE Sclaves or Sclavonians, a great division of the human family, and the stock of the predominating race in the Russian empire, were in Europe prior to the Christian era, and for several ages antecedent to it, if not, according to some authorities, at a period so remote as the rise of the Roman name and power. But five centuries of the current epoch had passed away before they established any considerable set-

tlements, as at Novgorod and Kiev; and it was not until the tenth century that any marked impression was made upon their ancient paganism. The light which history throws upon their original condition reveals them as a pastoral people, nomadic in their mode of life, and barbarous in their habits; hospitable to licentiousness, yet capriciously cruel; capable of energetic action yet fond of repose; alternating between the extremes of bold adventure and sottish indolence. In common with other savage nations, they regarded woman as born to be the drudge and slave of man. Hence polygamy was allowed, while the death of a husband was speedily followed by the enforced death of the widow, in order that he might not be kept waiting for a lacquey in the future world. Male children were esteemed, and dedicated to war; a superabundance of females was checked by infanticide; and the burden which infirmity and age imposed was escaped from by abandonment. In religion, divinities were as multifarious as the visible objects and audible sounds around them; and to some human victims were offered. Rivers, forests, harvests, the chase, and marriage had their presiding deities; and however differing in minor parts of their polytheistic creed, all the Sclavonic tribes agreed in honouring Perune, who occupied a place in their mythology analogous to the Zeus of the Greeks, and Jupiter of the Romans. He was supposed to look in the lightning, to speak in the

thunder; and was represented at Kiev by a huge image, with a trunk of the hardest wood, a head of silver, ears and whiskers of gold, and legs of iron. The natural thunder-storm in Russia is in general a definite event, and assumes a very impressive character. This is evident from the name applied to it, *grosà*, signifying something terrible. The people uncover the head at the first peal, and make the sign of the cross at every clap. It is not uncharitable to suppose that the memory of Perune has unconsciously established this usage.

According to a long-standing tradition, the Christian faith was first planted by the Apostle St. Andrew in the regions now known by the name of Russia. He is said to have sailed across the Euxine, landing near the mouth of the mighty Borysthenes, the Dnieper of modern geography. Ascending the river to Kiev, he there preached with success, baptized a number of the natives, and taught them to make the sign of the cross in an orthodox fashion. Though the tradition has no more authority than the one which connects St. Paul with our own country, and brings Joseph of Arimathea from his Judean home to the site of Glastonbury Abbey, yet Peter the Great honoured it by founding the Order of St. Andrew. This is the oldest of the Russian knightly orders, instituted at Moscow in 1698. It is also the most distinguished — the blue riband of the empire — that being the colour of the

collar, which has parallel rank to our own highest knightly ensign. The distinction was first conferred upon Menzikof, soon afterwards upon Mazeppa, the famous hetman of the Don Cossacks; and since the recent bombardment of Sveaborg, it has been conferred upon General De Berg, the commandant of the fortress.

The legend of St. Andrew, though sufficiently incredible, has no feature of absurdity like that which belongs to the traditional account of the evangelisation of Northern Russia. The merit of this performance is ascribed to St. Anthony, who executed it in a most original manner. It is affirmed that this worthy, disdaining to use craft common to secular men, such as ships and galleys, placed himself upon the top of a millstone; and on this strange bark floated over seas, across lakes, and along rivers, till the waters of the Volkhof brought him to Novgorod. Astonished, as well they might, at his coming in such an extraordinary way, the people immediately embraced a doctrine so marvellously imported; and a monastery was erected at the spot where the saint landed. Soon afterwards, while fishing, his disciples brought up a trunk in their nets, containing church ornaments, priestly vestments, and sacred utensils, of legitimate pattern, proper to be used by the faithful. The saint's body is said to have long remained incorrupt in the cell in which he died; and over the door the monks suspended a millstone, as the veritable Argo on which he navigated the deep.

St. Anthony is now regarded as having horses, possibly including asses, under his special charge.

There is a true as well as a false account of the introduction of Christianity into the Russian territory. The event dates from the middle of the ninth century. An exaggerated allusion is made to it by Photius, the patriarch of Constantinople, in a letter addressed to the eastern bishops in 866. "The Russians," he states, "celebrated for their cruelty, conquerors of the neighbouring tribes who have had the audacity to attack the Roman empire, have abandoned their superstitions, and become our friends. We have sent them a bishop and a priest; and they show a real zeal for the Christian religion." The principal agents were Methodius and Cyril, two Greek monks, brothers, and natives of Thessalonica, descended from an illustrious senatorian family, men whose labours were abundant, and whose lives were pure. Cyril, the most distinguished, had in early life borne the name of Constantine, and obtained the surname of Philosopher from his progress in learning. Having visited Bulgaria, Moravia, and the adjoining districts on an evangelising mission, they penetrated into the dark regions further north, and translated the Scriptures and the Liturgy into the Sclavonic tongue. For this purpose they invented an alphabet, principally formed from the Greek capitals, and gave to each letter the name of a word beginning with it. These characters are usually termed Cyrillian,

from one of the inventors; and the alphabet the Servian or ancient Russian. About the year 880, Pope John VIII. addressed a letter to a Sclavonic prince, in which he observes: — "We approve of the letters invented by the philosopher Constantine; and we order that the praises of Christ may be published in that language. It is not contrary to the faith to employ it in the public prayers of the church, and in reading the Holy Scriptures. He who made the three principal tongues, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, made the rest for his own glory." The year 868 saw the first Christian church erected at Kiev. Cyril died in 870.

The rise of the Russian monarchy was nearly contemporaneous with the introduction of the new faith. Rurik, its founder, a leader of Varangians from the Baltic, a bold Scandinavian or Norman rover, settled in the neighbourhood of Novgorod about the year 862, apparently upon the invitation of the inhabitants for their defence. The city was then a flourishing commercial site, the republican head of an extensive territory. But the auxiliary speedily became a master, established a princedom, and founded a dynasty which lasted for upwards of seven centuries. From this period, the Russian name occurs familiarly on the page of history as the denomination of a people, a state, and a country. The origin of the term is quite uncertain, though the conjectural derivation from

Russalki is probable,—the goddesses of the waters and forests,—in the mythology of the Sclavonians. As in western Europe, the chieftains of Scandinavia conducted predatory excursions from the shores of Britain and France to those of Spain and Italy, so in eastern Europe the conquerors from the Baltic rapidly pushed southward, seeking new fields of adventure, fresh provinces, and accumulated spoil. Oleg, the immediate successor of Rurik, advanced to the Dnieper, and transferred the seat of government from Novgorod to Kiev, attracted by the milder climate, and proximity to the coveted wealth and luxury of the Greek empire. Descending the river with his barbarians in boats, and crossing the Euxine, this potent warrior reached the gates of Constantinople, and wrung from the emperor an enormous booty as the price of his retreat. Igor, the third sovereign, twice engaged in a similar expedition. Thus early did Russian princes trace the road to Byzantium, and become as formidable to the Greek imperial family as their descendants have been to the Ottoman sultans. Olga, the widow of Igor, who reigned at Kiev during the minority of her son Sviatoslaf, passed within the walls of Constantinople; but upon the peaceful errand of receiving baptismal rites.

The princess had no favourable antecedents; nor was the christian convert any marked improvement upon the pagan dame. Olga made her name notorious for the perfidious cruelty with which she revenged the

slaughter of her tyrant husband. Having horribly oppressed the Drevlians, a Sclavonic tribe inhabiting the woods and marshes of the Pripet, they lay in ambush for him; and Igor perished in the fray. To avert retribution and future dissensions, the people proposed the incorporation of their principality with that of Kiev, and sent an embassy to Olga, saying, "We have killed your husband because he plundered and devoured like a wolf; but our princes are good, and make our country thrive: come and marry our prince Male." Olga pretended to receive the proposal with satisfaction, but had all the envoys put to death. Carefully concealing their fate, she required a second embassy of the most considerable men to be sent, to make arrangements for the union; and the second ambassadors shared the doom of the first. While still wearing a mask, she repaired in person to the Drevlians with a numerous retinue; and, after assuring them of the safety of their countrymen, prince Male and the chief families were invited to a solemn entertainment in honour of the alliance. In the midst of the festival they were all massacred. The infuriated woman then acted without disguise, let loose her army to butcher the terrified people, and laid siege to their principal town, Korosten. After long holding out it fell by stratagem. The inhabitants being offered an act of indemnity on condition of sending a certain number of pigeons as a sign of subjection, willingly complied.

Upon receiving the birds, lighted matches were fastened to their tails at night; and, being liberated, they flew back to their usual haunts to fire the wood-built town. It was reduced to ashes; and those who escaped the flames perished by the sword.

Having bathed in blood, and become familiar with horrors, the implacable widow determined to receive christian baptism,—a strange but not unnatural proceeding,—and repaired to Constantinople in 955, in order to have the ceremony performed in a manner as august as possible, by the hands of the patriarch himself. The imperial throne was then filled by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the historian, who has left a detailed account of the visit of the princess to his capital. She was received with all the honour due to her rank. The emperor led her to the font, stood sponsor upon the occasion, and introduced his guest into the communion of the church under the name of Helena. On this account, as the first royal convert, the honour of canonisation has been conferred upon her by the Russian church; and St. Olga now figures as the first native saint in the calendar of her country. The Emperor Nicholas bestowed her name upon his second daughter, the present princess of Wirtemberg. But the high example of Olga had no effect upon her subjects, or upon her son, who simply tolerated christianity, and adhered to paganism. "Would you have me to be a laughing-stock to my friends?" was the

reply of Sviatoslaf to the exhortations of his mother. He remained faithful to the end of his reign to the thunder-god, Perune, and the old mythology, identifying christians with cowards,—an opinion which the feeble character of the Greeks probably originated. Horse-flesh was often his only food. His knife was a sword, his bed the earth, on which he reposed with a saddle for his pillow, and a cloth of felt for his covering.

A different course was pursued by Vladimir, the sixth in succession from Rurik, who gained undivided power by fratricide in 981, firmly established his barbaric rule over barbarian tribes, raised the state to distinction in the esteem of neighbouring sovereignties, and ordered his subjects to join him in embracing a new religion. This prince combined in his character the daring of the north with the licentiousness of the south, for besides several wives, he had concubines as numerous as ever were possessed by Turkish sultans or Persian shahs. He commenced his reign as a pagan zealot, ordering his subjects to honour the national gods with special offerings in commemoration of his own successes. Pleased with the proposal, the men of Kiev resolved to sacrifice a christian youth to Perune. They renewed the decorations of the huge idol, and replenished his whiskers for the occasion. But the father protested against the proceeding, defended the boy, and both are said to have perished in a popular

tumult. Vladimir enriched the temples, and sustained idolatry with such liberality that the disciples of other creeds in neighbouring nations became anxious to make a convert of him, in order to profit by his munificence and power. Some event occurred, which has not been recorded, to shake his faith in the great block of wood and iron he had been accustomed to reverence; and dispose him to listen to representations in favour of different religious systems. The merits of Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Mohammedanism, and Greek Christianity were successively canvassed; and deputies were sent into the countries where they were professed to report upon their claims to attention. The first three were rejected for characteristic reasons. Judaism, the profession of a race without a national temple or a political status, and considered to be under the ban of heaven, was quickly dismissed. Romanism involved the recognition of a pope, claiming temporal as well as spiritual supremacy, and was therefore ineligible. Mohammedanism had powerful attractions in its sensual paradise and beautiful houris. But it interdicted wine; and "wine," said Vladimir, "is the delight of the Russians; we cannot do without it." There only remained Greek Christianity; and its imposing ceremonies, as witnessed by the deputies in the magnificent St. Sophia, at Constantinople, made a powerful impression. "If the Greek religion," said they, "had not been the best, Olga, your ancestress,

the wisest of mortals, would never have thought of embracing it." The prince determined to follow the example of the princess.

Having resolved to enter the communion of the Oriental church, the decision might at once have been carried into effect; but it suited the temperament of Vladimir to render an easy matter difficult. There were priests in his own capital ready to administer baptism, but they were deemed too poor and obscure to officiate where a high personage like himself was concerned. On the other hand, to go to Constantinople like his grandmother Olga for the initiatory rite, or to send for ecclesiastics from thence, was declined, as savouring of dependence upon the imperial throne. In this dilemma, he had recourse to an expedient in harmony with his times, his country, and himself, that of capturing by force of arms some valid administrators of the sacraments, and compelling the vanquished to christianise their victor. Accordingly, he made war upon the Greek empire, attacking with a powerful fleet and army the city of Cherson, the site of which is nearly identical with that of Sebastopol in the Crimea. So determined was the aggressor to enter into religious fellowship with its inhabitants, that he caused them to be informed, that he was prepared to remain three years before their walls. On commencing the siege, one of the chroniclers relates that he offered up the following prayer:—"O God! grant me Thy help to

take this town, that I may carry from it Christians and priests to instruct me and my people, and convey the true religion into my dominions!" Surely never before or since have the waters of baptism been sought in a manner so strange.

The city made a vigorous resistance. Numbers perished on both sides; and after a siege of six months, Vladimir was in great danger of never becoming a Christian. At length, a traitorous citizen, said to have been a priest, fastened a letter to an arrow, and shot it from the ramparts into his camp. It informed him, that the only fresh water of the inhabitants was obtained from a spring in his rear, by means of subterranean pipes. This supply being cut off by the besieging army, the horrors of thirst soon compelled the place to surrender at discretion. But the possession of Cherson, and of its train of ecclesiastics, was by no means the sole object of the conqueror's ambition. He demanded the hand of Anna in marriage, sister of the Emperors Basil and Constantine; and threatened Constantinople with a visit in case his wishes were not complied with. The candidate for matrimony intended to found upon the match a claim to the Greek empire. He was too much dreaded to be refused; and on the same day, his baptism and marriage were celebrated in great state at Cherson. Having restored his conquest to his brothers-in-law, Vladimir returned to his dominions, with a competent supply of archimandrites and priests,

sacred vessels and church books, images of saints and consecrated relics, not neglecting the more sensible importation of architects and professors of different handicrafts.

On reaching Kiev, the new convert signalised his zeal on behalf of the adopted religion by overthrowing the idols of his old faith, and treating the objects of former reverence with every species of contumely. Half measures were not characteristic of Vladimir. In assailing the national superstition, he began with the father of the gods, whose supposed power over the stronger elements of nature was in the most decisive manner put to the test. The image of the Thunderer, deprived of all its ornaments, and reduced to the character of a naked log, was tied to the tail of a horse, dragged to the Dnieper, and thrown into the river, after being soundly cudgelled by twelve stout soldiers on its passage to the stream. It has been said, that nothing can more strongly mark the mental condition of Vladimir than this conduct, as dark in thrashing the insensible block as in honouring it with worship. But it should be remembered, that the barbaric proceeding was directly calculated, as it was probably designed, to open the eyes of an ignorant populace to the folly of a venerated mythology. No thunder pealed, no lightning flashed, during the ceremony, and on the spot occupied by the temple of the dethroned divinity, the church of St. Basil, still standing, was erected. Though Perune

submitted quietly to an ignominious fate at Kiev, yet the same patience was not exemplified under similar treatment at Novgorod. The chronicles of the city state, that upon being tossed from the bridge into the Volkhof, the idol rose to the surface of the water, and throwing back a staff among the crowd, cried out loud as thunder, "Citizens, that is what I leave you in remembrance of me." Long afterwards, on the day which had been kept as the festival of the god, the young people were accustomed to run about the streets with staves and sticks, in consequence of this stupid tradition.

By proclamation, all the inhabitants of Kiev were ordered to repair to the Dnieper at a particular time to be baptized. Men and women, old and young, bowed to the edict. "If it were not good," said they, "to be baptized, the prince and the boyars would never submit to it." The young supported the aged, and infants were held in the arms of their mothers, while at a given signal the population entered the stream, and submitted to the sacrament with the precision of a regiment obeying orders at a review. But the royal children received the rite with greater ceremony. In a pretty romantic spot within the limits of Kiev, there now rises a lofty column surmounted by a cross, built over a fountain where they were baptized. Close to its base is a wooden crucifix, bearing in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King

of the Jews." Vladimir, in the sequel of his reign, exhibited an improved character. He put away his harem, was liberal to the poor, and more humane in his general conduct. When awarding punishment, he would exclaim, "What am I, that I should condemn a fellow-creature to death?" and the sanguinary portion of the Russian laws was rescinded by him, though restored by his successor. He has hence received from his countrymen the surname of the Great, been canonised by the church as the first Christian prince, and placed on a level with the Apostles. Upwards of seven centuries and a half after his death, Catherine II. instituted in his honour the order of the "Holy and Apostle-like St. Vladimir," a distinction which is highly valued. His son Yaroslaf built the stately church of St. Sophia at Kiev, the oldest cathedral in the Russian Empire; and before the eleventh century closed, the city is said to have been comparable to Constantinople in the number of its sacred edifices.

A religion so mechanically received had little effect upon the people in improving their habits, or upon succeeding rulers, whose history exhibits a shocking succession of sanguinary civil wars, breaches of faith, and cruelty in its worst forms. One exception must be made in favour of Vladimir Monomachus, great-grandson of Vladimir I., who ascended the throne of Kiev in 1114, and married Gyda, daughter of the unfortunate Harold, the last of our Saxon kings. Distinguished by military

qualities and high character, he left a death-bed admonition to his children, which, with some weaknesses and traces of the old leaven of warrior ferocity, is remarkable for the enlightened spirit of its maxims. It contains interesting illustrations of ancient manners.

"My dear children," said he, "praise God, love men; for it is neither fasting, nor solitude, nor monastic vows, that can give you eternal life; it is beneficence alone.

"Be fathers to the orphan; be yourselves judges for the widow. Put to death neither the innocent nor the guilty, for nothing is more sacred than the life and soul of a Christian.

"Keep not the priests at a distance from you; do good to them, that they may offer up prayers to God for you.

"Violate not the oath which you have sworn on the cross. My brothers said to me, 'Assist us to expel the sons of Rotislaf and seize upon their provinces, or renounce our alliance.' But I answered, 'I cannot forget that I have kissed the cross.'

"Endeavour constantly to obtain knowledge. Without having quitted his palace, my father spoke five languages; a thing which captivates for us the admiration of foreigners.

"In war, be vigilant; be an example to your voyevodes; never retire to rest without having posted your guards; never take off your arms while you are within

the enemy's reach; and to avoid ever being surprised, be early on horseback.

"If you find yourself affected by some ailment, make three prostrations down to the ground before the Lord, and let the sun never find you in bed. As soon as the first gleams of day appeared, my father, and all the virtuous men by whom he was surrounded, did thus—they glorified the Lord; they then seated themselves to deliberate or to administer justice to the people, or they went to the chase; and in the middle of the day they slept, which God permits to man as well as to the beasts and birds.

"For my part I accustomed myself to do everything that I might have ordered my servants to do. Night and day, summer and winter, I was perpetually moving about. I wished to see everything with my own eyes. Never did I abandon the poor or the widow to the oppressions of the powerful. I made it my duty to inspect the churches and the sacred ceremonies of religion, as well as the management of my property, my stables, and the vultures and hawks of my hunting establishment.

"I have made eighty-three campaigns and many expeditions. I concluded nineteen treaties with the Polovtzy. I took captive a hundred of their princes whom I set free again, and I put two hundred to death by throwing them into rivers.

"No one has ever travelled more rapidly than I

have done. Setting out in the morning from Tcheringof, I arrived at Kiev before the hour of vespers.

"In my youth, what falls from my horse did I not experience! wounding my feet and my hands, and breaking my head against the trees; but the Lord watched over me.

"In hunting, amidst the thickest forests, how many times have I myself caught wild horses and bound them together! How many times have I been thrown by buffaloes, wounded by the antlers of stags, and trodden under the feet of elks! A furious wild boar rent my sword from its baldrick. My saddle was torn to pieces by a bear. This terrible beast rushed upon my courser, which he threw down upon me, but the Lord protected me.

"O my children, fear neither death nor wild beasts; trust in Providence, it far surpasses all human precautions."

The thirteenth century gave a third royal saint to the ecclesiastical calendar, in the person of Alexander Nevski, a prince distinguished for his bravery and patriotism. He reigned at Vladimir, a city founded on an affluent of the Volga by the son of Vladimir Monamachus, to which the seat of the grand principality was removed in 1167, as a more central and secure site than Kiev. But in the time of Alexander, 1245, the whole of Russia was in subjection to the Tatars of the Golden Horde or Camp, and he only held

his principality by permission of the Grand Khans. Attacked, at a period so favourable for invasion, by the Swedes, Danes, and Livonians, who demanded the submission of Novgorod, he defeated them signally on the banks of the Neva, and gained thereby the surname of Nevski. Having occasion to visit the Camp, in order to avert the displeasure of the Khan from his people, who had massacred some of the tax collectors, he died suddenly on the road while returning home, under circumstances that render it probable that poison had been administered to him previous to his departure. Hence, as a victim to the public welfare, the church canonised him, and invented some miracles to enhance his reputation, while justifying the act. The metropolitan is said to have had a divine intimation of his death, and as according to custom the priest was repeating the prayer of absolution by the side of the corpse, one of the hands was observed to open as if to receive the benefit. The prince has ever been a popular saint with his countrymen. Hence Peter the Great caused his bones to be removed from a convent on the Volga to St. Petersburg, in order to attach his subjects to the new capital. He also founded the monastery of St. Alexander Nevski in his honour, standing at the extreme end of the Nevski Prospect, and there deposited his remains. But no sooner had this been done, than some churchmen, who disliked the proceeding, gave it out that the saint, indignant at being disturbed,

or not sleeping comfortably in the cold earth of Finland, had got up in the night and walked off to his old grave. The authors of this trick were summarily checked by an admonition from their master, that it would be no trifling matter for them if such peripatetic rumours were repeated. A pyramidal monument over the tomb is of massive silver, and the keys of Adrianople are now attached to it. Peter likewise instituted the Order of St. Alexander Nevski, the red riband of the empire. The Emperor Paul conferred the distinction upon Admiral Duncan for his naval victory at Camperdown.

Kiev, the cradle of the Russian sovereignty and church, is also the great charnel-house of its saints. Behind the Petcherskoi monastery are two caverns excavated in the precipitous cliff which overhangs the Dnieper. They were occupied by living monks prior to the erection of the building, and have since accommodated the remains of departed holy men of repute. The bodies are ranged along the sides in open coffins enveloped, like Egyptian mummies, in wrappers, so that no part, not even the face, is left visible. But the stiffened hands are so arranged as to receive the kisses of devotees, and on the breasts are written the name of the deceased, with occasionally a short record of their deeds. There are upwards of 120 of these ghastly figures in this subterranean necropolis, consisting of archbishops, bishops, and archimandrites,

princes and princesses, with a heterogeneous assemblage of bakers of bread for consecration, wafer-makers, image-painters, fast-observers, and grave-diggers, besides the twelve masons who built the cathedral. Kiev is hence the Jerusalem and Mecca of the empire—its holy city—annually visited by multitudes, who repair to the catacombs to seek an interest in the intercession of the saints, firmly believing their bodies to have been preserved incorruptible, in honour of their virtues. They come from the most distant regions; the confines of Tartary and the wilds of Siberia, as far as Kamschatka; performing the whole journey on foot, seldom sleeping under a roof, and depending for subsistence upon the precarious charity of the miserable peasants on the road. The pilgrims have amounted in a single year to as many as 50,000. The caverns are black with the smoke of their torches. They travel usually in large companies, headed by a white-bearded monk, and when encamping for the night in the steppes, their fires and melancholy chants give a wild interest to the landscape. "I have seen," says a traveller, "the gathering of pilgrims at Jerusalem, and the whole body moving together from the gates of the city to bathe in the Jordan; and I have seen the great caravan of 40,000 true believers tracking their desolate way through the deserts of Arabia to the tomb of the Prophet at Mecca; but I remember, as if they were before me now, the groups of Russian pilgrims strewed along

the road and sleeping under the pale moonlight, the bare earth their bed, the heavens their only covering."

The honour in which the canonised are held is expressed in a thousand ways. Agricultural labour and various household arrangements are largely regulated by their commemoration days. The farmer does not begin to plough when the weather is favourable, but on St. George's day; cattle are not driven into the fields when the grass is green, but on St. Stephen's day; and apples are not plucked when they are ripe, but on the feast of Mary. In the principal towns, the churches are crowded with pictures of saints, set in gorgeous frames, bedizened with jewels, and surrounded with votive offerings, according to the amount of popularity enjoyed by the respective individuals, before which devotees repeat prayers and perform genuflexions. Though wholly destitute of artistic merit, those of ancient execution are somewhat remarkable objects. The complexion is almost Indian, the eyes small, the cheeks thin, the nose sharp, the hair and beard scanty, while in those of modern date, the bull-headed Russian of the present day appears, with his full cheeks, abundant hair, blue eyes, and turnip nose. Every peasant has also one or more wretched daubs in a corner of his room, which, in his ignorance, he enfranchises with consciousness; and hence some have been known to cover up their images when about to commit a sin, in order that they may not be seen.

It is the church and state doctrine of Russia, that pictures of saints have power to work miracles, heal diseases, and win battles. When Tamerlane invaded the country, and suddenly turned back at the Oka, it was regarded as a miracle performed by a picture of the Virgin exhibited on the occasion. This wonder-working image, said to have been painted by St. Luke, was brought by one of the early grand princes from Constantinople, and is now in the Cathedral of the Assumption at Moscow. When the French were in the empire in 1812, the metropolitan of Moscow sent the image of St. Sergius to the Emperor Alexander for his protection. Blindly attached to their religion, and reverencing these objects, the government has employed them in the present war to rouse the ardour of the troops. Hence the remarkable order of the day, issued by Prince Gortschakoff at Sebastopol: — "In the time of the earliest wars of the Russians, the archpriests and other ecclesiastics of the orthodox church gave their benedictions to the troops who were armed for the defence of the country. This benediction, which called for the presence of the sacred images in the midst of our regiments, was the source of all our successes against the enemy. Thus the sacred and miraculous image of the Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, from Smolensko, gave by its presence in the army a series of victories to our arms, and led our soldiers from Moscow to Paris. Now that all our countrymen pray with

fervour for us, his Eminence the Metropolitan Philarete of Kiev, after the example of ancient times, has just blessed the troops confided to my command, by taking from the catacombs of Kiev the sacred and miraculous image which represents the ascension of the Mother of God, our celestial intercessor, and which in bygone times was conferred by the Mother of God on that temple, as a pledge of the eternal protection which is granted to Orthodox Russia."

It has been said with truth, that throughout the empire the Christian religion is everywhere overshadowed by the Russian. As an instance, the native saints are much more popular than the real apostles, and have their festivals celebrated with far higher honours. Pictures of St. Paul and St. Peter are comparatively rare; while the St. Vladimirs, Alexanders, and Nicholases are indefinitely multiplied. Even the Virgin is not honoured as such, but under a Russianised form, as Our Lady of Kasan, or of Kiev, or the Iberian Mother of God. The people reason, that native saints, being their countrymen, must necessarily feel a greater kindness towards them than the foreign. In the national Pantheon, the highest seat is occupied by St. Nicholas, as the greatest wonder-worker, according to church legends, either being more gifted than his compeers, or more patriotic. His picture, say the ecclesiastical oracles, when Napoleon's powder-waggons exploded near one of the gates of the Kremlin, pre-

served it from destruction. The tower of the gate was fractured, but the rent stopped when it came to the place where the saint's physiognomy hung; and neither the frame nor the glass enclosing it was in the least injured! In the esteem of the besotted populace, St. Nicholas mightily presides over the destinies of Russia, holds in his hand the keys of heaven, and stands in the place of the very Godhead.

CHAP. II.

SUBJECTION — INDEPENDENCE — AUTOCRACY.

DIVISION AND WEAKNESS. — NOVGOROD. — ITS COMMERCE AND PUBLIC SPIRIT. — REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION. — THE ASSEMBLY-BELL. — INVASION OF THE MONGOL-TATARS. — IGNOMINIOUS VASSALAGE OF RUSSIA. — IVAN KALITA. — PREDOMINANCE OF MOSCOW. — RUSSIAN CLERGY. — DMITRI AND ST. SERGIUS. — BATTLE OF THE DON. — IVAN III. — HIS CHARACTER AND POLICY. — DESIGNS AGAINST NOVGOROD. — ITS SUBMISSION AND DECLINE. — DESPICABLE CONDUCT OF IVAN. — HIS SUCCESS. — MARRIAGE WITH SOPHIA. — THE COURT AND CAPITAL. — VASSALI V.

THE early sovereigns had in general a numerous offspring; and as the patrimonial lords of the country, they provided for their sons by granting them the government of distinct cities or principalities, not only in their lifetime, but by testamentary bequests. Hence arose the distinction of grand-prince and prince. The several sub-princes were bound to do homage and pay tribute to the grand-prince, as his principal vassals, but were otherwise independent; and upon his death, each principality was regarded as a fief hereditary in the family of him who held it. This policy, adopted by Vladimir, Yaroslaf, and Vladimir Monomachus, seems referable to the force of circumstances, quite as much as to the improvidence of its

authors. for in uncivilised states, it is difficult otherwise to prevent youths of the blood from plotting against the throne, and mutually contending for it on the occasion of a vacancy. Novgorod, Tver, Pskov, Viatka, Tmutarakan, Moscow, and other places, were thus apportioned; and by the year 1150, there were not less than seventy appanaged princes under the sovereign of Kiev as grand-prince and lord-paramount. The consequences of this arrangement, in a rude condition of society, may readily be anticipated. Those who were of martial spirit and rapacious temper, sought to enlarge their patrimony, and increase their power, by aggression upon their weaker brethren. Several confederated together to fall upon the rest, and share the spoil, while, if the liege-lord happened to be incompetent, they refused the tokens of allegiance, and competed with him for the supremacy. Hence arose a thousand obscure conflicts, violent civil wars prolonged for years, and dark domestic crimes; and not unfrequently the disinherited added to the general confusion, by calling in the aid of foreigners to be reinstated in their rights. But these were not the only evils resulting from the creation of appanages by despotic prerogative. It involved the principle, that the grand-prince might regulate in the same way the succession to the supreme power; and this right has in a modified form descended to the imperial crown of the czars. Russia thus became "a house divided against itself;" a scene

of internal strife; a collection of governments, jealous of each other, or rancorously hostile, rather than a simple monarchy. In such circumstances there could be no concentration of power, no effective resistance offered to an invader; and that general weakness was produced which antedates a political overthrow. It facilitated in this instance the conquest of the country by the wild and warlike descendants of Zenghis Khan.

Among the smaller states created by partitioning the larger, that of Novgorod was by far the most important and powerful. It acquired distinction from having been the seat of government under Rurik; and was eminently favoured by a geographical position in the north, securing it from the social disturbances and foreign invasions which agitated the centre and the south. Communication with the Baltic promoted commercial industry and enterprise; and it became one of the chief factories of the Hanseatic league. The activities of commerce fostered public spirit, and brought wealth to strengthen it. Hence though nominally a principality, the form of government was mainly republican. There was a Namestnick or prince, usually a son or brother of the reigning grand-prince, who officiated as the general of the army, and the judge when his verdict was requested. But he did not succeed to the position by hereditary right; and in the great majority of cases he was not appointed by the lord paramount independent of the suffrages of the

people, who as frequently exercised the privilege of deposition as of election. It is related in the annals of Novgorod, that in the space of one hundred years there was a succession of thirty-four princes. Any infringement of the public liberty, or undue personal license, the citizens resented by meeting in a body to remonstrate formally with the offender, or adopt some sharper measure. "Why do you," said they on one occasion, "prince of Novgorod, act unjustly? You keep a great number of hawks and falcons. You have a large pack of hounds; and you have deprived us of the rivers in which we used to fish. We can no longer submit to this tyranny. Get away from us therefore in the name of God. When you are gone we shall provide ourselves with another prince." The chief to whom this homily was addressed, instead of giving himself airs, took the rebuff meekly, begged pardon, and promised to do better for the future. But the citizens had tested fully his sincerity and capacity, and carried the sentence of ejectment into effect. There are "powers that be" in various quarters at present, to whom the application of a similar process would be wholesome discipline.

Even the lord-paramount had to demean himself humbly to the Novgorodians, when cause of offence had been given, in order to retain them in the bonds of allegiance. One memorable instance of this is on record, when the metropolitan wrote in his name to

soothe the citizens. It would be difficult to find a parallel to the letter in the communications between sovereigns and subjects. "The grand prince has acted wrong towards you; but he is sorry for it all; desires you to forgive him, and will behave better for the future. I will be bound for him; and beseech you to receive him with honour and dignity."

In the constitution of Novgorod, the first officer was the Posadnick, a burgomaster or mayor, elected for a limited term by the municipal body. The next was the Tisiatski, a boyar of the commons, or tribune of the people, appointed to watch the conduct of the prince and burgomaster. A senate composed of proprietors of the first class, whose office was elective and temporary, comprised the other principal functionaries. Popular assemblies were held to decide upon questions of peace or war, the appointment of magistrates, and sometimes the choice of a bishop, or of a prince. Every citizen had the right of voting; and the prince could not be present at the deliberations. These assemblies were convoked by the sound of a famous bell, called the *vetchooi-kolokol*, or assembly-bell, which the inhabitants regarded as a type of their independence, the palladium of the state, and dignified with the appellation of "eternal." It was also tolled on all cases of public emergency, and when political or other grave offences were to be adjudged. Justice was summary in its course, severe and barbarian in its

punishments. On hearing the assembly-bell, each citizen armed with two stones repaired to the market-place, where the judges formed a tribunal. If the accused were found guilty, lapidation followed; his house was plundered and pulled down; and his property confiscated. The city, seated near the confluence of the Volkhof with Lake Ilmen, occupied, in the days of its commercial and political glory, an area of sixty-three versts in circuit, and contained from 300,000 to 400,000 inhabitants. Its authority extended over great part of the modern provinces of St. Petersburg, Archangel, Vologda, and Perm; and its power was so great as to originate the ancient proverb, *Quis contra Deos et magnam Novgorodiam?* "Who can resist the Gods and Novgorod the Great?" Favoured by its northerly position, it escaped the ravages of the Mongol Tatars, who never approached it nearer than about sixty miles; and was comparatively prosperous amid the general calamities of the country, though it participated by tribute in the common degradation.

The terrible Asiatics entered Southern Russia under Tuschki, the son of Zenghis Khan, about the year 1223; and thirteen years later, the invasion was renewed under Batu Khan, a grandson, who rapidly overrun the country with his forces. The torrent, meeting with only partial checks, owing to infamous internal dissensions, was overwhelming. Its fury was specially directed against the towns and cities. They

were useless to a pastoral migratory people, who wanted only space for their tents, and pasture for their horses. It was even proposed in an assembly of chieftains to massacre all the inhabitants of the conquered districts in order to devote their settlements to pasturage. On advancing northward, after ravaging the south, the imbecile Yaroslaf II., grand prince of Vladimir, was employed at the critical juncture in celebrating the marriage of one of his boyars. Quitting the capital to collect an army, the enemy broke into it in his absence; and his wife, with the grand princesses, and other persons of distinction, were burnt alive in the church to which they had fled for refuge. Upon settling his empire, when weary of conquest, Batu Khan fixed his capital, commonly called the Camp of the Golden Horde, at Serai, on the Volga, in the neighbourhood of the present Astrachan. Never was subjection more complete and ignominious than that to which Russia was now reduced. It continued from first to last for 225 years, or from 1237 to 1462; and left a mark upon the character of the people which has not been effaced. "Rub a Russian," said Napoleon, "and you have a Tatar."

The sovereigns of the Horde did not in general interfere in affairs of internal administration in the conquered territory; but contented themselves with having their paramount authority acknowledged by the payment of tribute, and other servile observances. At first, the

tribute took the shape of a contribution demanded from the princes, who had to levy it upon their subjects. But soon afterwards the tax was laid upon persons and property in the respective principalities; and to guard against fraud or evasion, the khans appointed their own officers to superintend its collection, none being exempt but the clergy. Though the country retained its native rulers, yet they had all to appear in person at the Golden Camp to solicit the right of governing, and received investiture on their bended knees. Owing to the distance, and designed delays at the barbaric court, either to extort largesses or manifest superiority, a whole twelvemonth was frequently consumed in these journeys. Upon being visited by an envoy from the khans, they had to advance to meet him, to spread a carpet of fur under his Horse's feet, to hear the message read upon their knees, to present the ambassador with a cup of kŏumiss, and to lick from the mane of his horse the drops that fell upon it. The princes were also liable to be summoned to the Horde to undergo trial, when charges were preferred against them; and several underwent capital punishment, basely accused on false grounds by their own compeers, who wished to succeed to their inheritance. In this way Yury, prince of Moscow, who had married a sister of Usbeg Khan, supplanted the Grand Prince Michael. The latter, calumniated by the former to his liege lord, was called before the khan, who, yielding to the influence

of his Russian brother-in-law, consigned him to the hands of the executioner, and transferred his dignity to the infamous intriguer. Moscow finally superseded Vladimir as the seat of the grand princedom in 1328, and became the fourth of the Russian capitals. This was under Ivan I. surnamed Kalita, or the Purse, who acquired the title from undertaking to collect the revenue for Usbeg. In discharging the office he did not forget to lay on heavier imposts than he was authorised, by means of which he enriched himself, and could propitiate the lord paramount as occasion required.

The origin of Moscow is involved in obscurity; but it is traditionally referred to an adventure of one of the grand princes some time prior to the incursions of the Tatars. He had heard much of the beautiful wife of a chieftain who owned a domain in the district; and sent orders for both to appear before him. Suspecting his intentions the husband refused to obey, upon which he was accused of contumacy, and put to death. The grand prince visited the widow; and often remained a considerable time in the neighbourhood in order to renew such attentions. This led to temporary dwellings being erected to accommodate his attendants, who attracted traders and other persons to the site, requiring tenements. Thus by insensible degrees Moscow arose, destined to become the seat of empire, and to experience vicissitudes which have been rarely paral-

leled in the history of any other city, never surpassed. Ivan surrounded the embryo capital with wooden palisades, which supported a rampart of earth and stone. The primate removed his residence from Vladimir to it, and predicted its future eminence, requiring him to build a cathedral. "My bones," said he, "shall rest in this city. Here will the primates fix their abode; it will overcome all its enemies. You and your successors will be great and famous." With consummate address Ivan occupied and improved his position. As a rigorous tax-gatherer, he supplied himself with Russian gold, sufficient not only to pay the ordinary tribute to the khans, but to purchase concessions by splendid voluntary gifts; and armed with their authority, which ensured submission, he assailed several of the minor Russian princedoms around him, and established the predominance of the grand Muscovite principality.

The exemption of the Russian clergy from taxation under the Tatar regime, before mentioned, is an interesting and important incident, for it had an immense effect upon the condition of the country. It seems to have been adopted as a stroke of policy by the conquerors, intended to secure the sympathies of a body of boundless influence with the people, in order by their means to reconcile the latter to the yoke. Hence it was not the only privilege conferred upon ecclesiastical persons, who actually profited by the political degrada-

tion of the seculars. Usbeg Khan, by a firman in 1313, declared that henceforth the church should be the only judge of the church, and of all who dwelt on its domains. He not only renounced the tribute due to him from the lands of the clergy, but all his other rights to which the rest of the community were subject, as plough-money, tolls, farm-tax, and relays for his service. The punishment of death was also decreed to whosoever should plunder sacred property, or even speak disparingly of the Greek religion. However, the purpose failed for which these immunities were granted, they rendered the ecclesiastical life popular, as a refuge from exaction and oppression. Multitudes of high and low degree, men and women, gladly repaired to the cloisters, where alone they could retain their property, and be at peace. The males became monks, and the females nuns, for whose accommodation monasteries and convents arose in every direction; so that under the sway of aliens in religion more christian establishments were founded than at any previous or subsequent era of Russian history. These buildings, surrounded with strong embattled walls, surmounted with watch-towers, were intended for military strongholds as well as devotional retreats. They have often since answered the purpose of citadels, and been places of refuge for the czars from the turbulence of their subjects.

Discord destroyed the unity of the Horde, and gra-

dually, broke its power, rendering the journeys of the Russian princes to the Golden Camp less and less formidable. They revealed the growing weakness of the lords paramount, as several contended at the same time for the dignity, till at last the grand-prince Dmitri, availing himself of the sanguinary dissensions of the Tatars, determined to contest the supremacy with them. He refused the usual tribute, and had the temerity to put the ambassador to death who was sent to claim it, instead of licking his horse's mane. In the ensuing struggle, he did not rely alone upon carnal weapons, but repaired to St. Sergius for counsel and assistance, then residing at a spot about sixty versts from Moscow, now occupied by the Troitzki monastery, erected in his honour, where his bones repose. The history of this saint is a series of miracles. It is related that, when his mother was *enceinte*, the child uttered such a loud cry of congratulation as she received the communion that the whole congregation heard it. The babe also came into the world with a perfect knowledge of the catechism and the ten commandments; and if on fast days his mother ate too heartily, the intelligently-pious infant refused to suck. St. Sergius patronised the enterprise, and Dmitri received the eucharist. Being joined by two pugnacious monks, he crossed the Don at the head of 200,000 men, and destroyed the bridge of boats in his rear in order to render his troops desperate. A Tatar challenged one

of the monks to single combat. Both were slain. The general conflict then commenced. Dmitri, after having had two horses killed under him, and fighting on foot with a club, was about to give up all for lost, when the prayers of St. Sergius took effect, and brought the elements to his assistance. A stormy wind, which had hitherto been favourable to the enemy, suddenly changed sides. The Russians rallied and obtained the victory; but such was the carnage that the conqueror had his army cut down to 40,000 men. This battle, fought in 1380, was the first signal blow given to the domination of the Tatars, and had an immense influence, as showing that they were not invincible. The triumph had likewise been gained by the minor princes cooperating with the grand prince, — an instructive lesson to the people and the rulers, though they were slow to profit by it,—that unanimity was only wanting in their councils to place independence within their reach.

His success on the Don won for Dmitri the surname of Donski, by which he is distinguished in history, as the victory of his predecessor Alexander on the Neva acquired for him the title of Nevski. This old Russian usage has been retained to the present day. Thus Orlof, under Catherine II., received the surname of Tchesmenski for the naval triumph at Tchesme, and Suwarrow that of Rimnikski, for his victory at the river Rimniks; while Diebitch, in the reign of Nicholas,

obtained the title of Balkanski for his famous passage of the Balkan.

The victor was unable to preserve the advantage gained. The Tatars returned in force; and, being deserted by the princes of the neighbouring states, he withdrew from Moscow, which fell by capitulation into the hands of the enemy. The city was of wood, except the ramparts, and the Kremlin, which had recently been erected of stone. It was devoted to the flames in spite of the terms of surrender, and the inhabitants remaining in it were ruthlessly massacred. But though Russia was compelled to return to a tributary condition, —a bondage which lasted for seventy years after the death of Dmitri — he pointed out by his dying instructions to his son and successor the true course of policy to be pursued in order to free the nation from foreign vassalage,—that of bringing its disjointed parts into cohesion, under the paramount control of the grand-princedom. In the interval named, the condition of the people was terrible beyond description. A fresh Asiatic conqueror appeared; and Tamerlane threatened to commence anew the epoch of slavery. But on his advance towards Moscow he suddenly reversed his course at the river Oka, and retired into the recesses of Asia, having simply inflicted a mortal blow upon the old oppressor,—the empire of the Horde. Famine, pestilence, and earthquake visited the miserable land; and civil war added its horrors to the natural calamities

of the times. Vassili III., son of Dmitri, threw off the yoke; but the step was premature, and he had to bow again his shoulders to the burden. Vassili IV., a grandson, had no nerve for such a proceeding; and was, besides, the plaything and victim of domestic foes. Induced to stay at the Troitzki monastery, on returning from his investiture at the camp, he was seized by the Prince of Mojask, who barbarously put out his eyes; and he reigned as Vassili the Blind. At last, the grand principality of Moscow devolved to Ivan III., surnamed the Great, who incorporated all the states with his own dominion, enfranchised the nation with independence of foreign control, and firmly fastened upon it the curse of an autocratic yoke.

In all regal history there is no example of a meaner spirit than that of Ivan III., or of signal successes being gained by more craven methods. Though pusillanimous in the extreme, he conceived the most ambitious projects, and was wary enough to keep them lodged in the dark recesses of his own breast. Being an artful manager and steady to his purpose, he attained it by slow and insidious movements without danger to himself; got rid of foes by using them against each other; and contrived to have his own cowardice confounded with far-seeing sagacity. There was no humiliation to which he would not have stooped, even to kissing the stirrup of a Tatar envoy, or taking an oath of religious apostasy, in order to gain a step towards

the great aim of his life, that of being independent out of his domains and autocrat within. He never hazarded war so long as the end in view could be compassed by Machiavellian policy, however tedious and perfidious the process. Though armies were levied he dared not lead them, nor ever intended them to strike in battle so much as to overcome by fear. He seemed to have had a morbid dread of allowing the mightiest armaments to try their strength, lest there should be a mischance in the struggle; and preferred to withdraw them in the face of the enemy, indifferent to the display of his own dastard spirit, rather than run the risk of an actual encounter. Ivan ascended the throne in 1462, at the age of twenty-two, and occupied it forty-three years. He began his reign by frankly acknowledging the rights of the other Russian states, while determining to crush them; and humbly professed himself a faithful vassal of the khans, though eluding under specious pretexts the payment of tribute, and bribing a Tatar princess to aid him in the evasion. For his first enterprise, the reduction of Kasan, a Tatar city, he made immense preparations; then countermanded the campaign after it had commenced, frightened as to the result, and deeming intrigue preferable to force; then sanctioned it with ardour when the troops assembled had of their own accord rushed to the attack, and gained advantages which ensured success; but took care to remain himself at Moscow, out of the way of harm.

The reduction of the neighbouring Russian states to his own direct rule was a work of difficulty and time, especially in the case of Novgorod, extending over a series of years. Anticipating his intentions, the citizens took the initiative in openly assuming a hostile attitude. They sent away his officers, seized the domains that belonged to him as the liege lord, and allied themselves by treaty with the Prince of Lithuania. To this last step they are said to have been stimulated by Marpha, the rich widow of a burgomaster, an ambitious woman, who had a Lithuanian lover, and threw open her palace to the people, in order to encourage them to revolt. Ivan, at this proceeding, was calm and passive, apparently a wholly uninterested party. But he stealthily formed a combination against the refractory community, tempting some by the report of its wealth, and rousing the princes and nobles by referring to its democratic institutions; while he had agents among the citizens promoting domestic dissension, setting the poor against the rich, the lower classes against the higher. When his plans were matured, he sent to them an ambassador, requiring to be acknowledged as the lord paramount. The demand was scornfully refused, but being divided among themselves, the Novgorodians were compelled to return to their allegiance to him. With this he was for the time content. But it was only an instalment of the object at which he aimed, that of superseding his feudal rights with those of an absolute master.

Through seven long years Ivan tampered with the people, intent upon terminating their political existence, but carefully concealing the design. He made no victims owing to the revolt, expressed no resentment, but sought to inspire confidence by fair professions; and so far succeeded as to induce the unsuspecting citizens to refer their differences to his decision, though in violation of ancient usage. All at once, when ready for action, he dropped the mask, and the veil fell from the eyes of his unhappy dupes. Availing himself of the wilful or inadvertent speech of an envoy, who addressed him by the name of sovereign, he laid claim to the character in an absolute sense, summoned the republic to take the oath of allegiance to him as its only legislator and judge, required his boyars to be received into the city, and the public assemblies to cease for ever. This outburst of tyranny produced a corresponding explosion of rage and consternation. The great bell summoned the people to the market-place, and the luckless envoy was put to death. "Ivan," said they, "is our lord, but he shall never be our sovereign; the tribunal of his deputies may sit at Goroditch, but never at Novgorod; Novgorod is and always shall be its own judge." In vain the determination. Ivan, upon hearing of it, affected the most painful surprise. He appeared to writhe under a sense of injury, and loudly complained to the priests and nobles that he had been treacherously deceived. The people had themselves in-

vested him with the title of sovereign, and now that he simply acted as such, they exposed him to the shame of being disavowed. "I will reign at Novgorod," responded he to the audacious rebels, "as I do at Moscow. You must surrender all to me; your posadnick, and the bell which summons you to the national council." He had collected the means necessary to enforce his will, a vast army; but according to his characteristic policy, he preferred to conquer without a battle, and kept it in sight ready for action, till hopeless despondency induced submission. On the 15th of January, 1478, the people resigned themselves to their fate, took the oath of servitude, and submitted to the autocracy of Moscow. Seven principal citizens, with Marpha, were carried away prisoners, and 300 cart loads of gold, silver, precious stones, furs, cloths, and other valuables formed the spoil.

The hand that destroyed the liberties of Novgorod inadvertently marred its fortunes. Upon the plea that one of the Hanse towns had offered him an insult, Ivan confiscated the property of the league in the city, and put forty-nine German merchants in irons. The prisoners were afterwards liberated, but the property was never restored. This act, destroying confidence, annihilated commerce; foreign trade took another route, and the once flourishing emporium of the north gradually declined. "Next unto Moscow," says Chancellor, an English visitor before its decay, "the city of

Novgorod is the chiefest in Russia; for although it be in majestie inferior to it, yet in greatness it goeth beyond it. It is the chiefest and greatest mart town of all Muscovy; and albeit that the Emperor's seat is not there but at Moscow, yet the commodiousness of the river, falling into that gulf which is called the Sinus Finnicus, whereby it is well frequented by merchants, makes it more famous than Moscow itself." There still remain traces of its ancient extent and importance; relics of the house of the celebrated Marpha are shown in the grass-grown streets; but the place itself is utterly insignificant. The famous assembly bell, of considerable size, is in the Kremlin at Moscow.

Using the same means of chicanery and terror, Ivan assailed the other republics and princedoms, and brought them into servile subjection to him, consolidating numerous tyrannies in one. During the process, in 1480, he was interrupted by the Tatars of the Horde, who invaded the country to recover their former ascendancy and enforce the usual tribute. All Russia was ready to repel the enemy, and anxious by a decisive blow to assure itself of freedom from foreign bondage, while punishing the oppression of centuries. The towns poured forth their armed population to meet the foe on the banks of the Oka. But the grand prince was cowed. So great was his terror that he fled from the army, shut himself up in his capital to concoct deliverance by intrigue, and ordered his son to join him in the

city. Never did despicable spirit show itself more avowedly. Astonished and half-frantic, the people were on the verge of rebellion. "Why," said they, "had he overburdened them with taxes without paying the khan his tribute? And when he had brought the enemy into the heart of the country, why did he refuse to fight for it?" Constrained by such indignant expostulations to ask the advice of the bishops and boyars, they replied, "Does it become mortals to dread death? It is in vain to fly from fear, march boldly against the enemy." Even his son declared, instead of obeying him, that he would rather die at his post than follow the example of his father. Much against his will, Ivan was compelled to rejoin the army, 200,000 strong, a little stream, the Lugra, dividing the rival hosts. But he would not cross it, and only thought of effecting the retirement of the foe by a compromise. Then it was that the primate interposed. "Ah prince," said he, "to what counsels have you lent your ear? Is it not to throw away your shield and shamefully take flight? From what a height of grandeur are you not descending? Would you give up Russia to fire and sword, and the churches to plunder? And whither would you fly? Can you soar like the eagle? Will you fix your nest amidst the stars? The Lord will cast you down even from that asylum. No! you will not desert us; you will blush at the name of fugitive and traitor to your country."

But Ivan did become a fugitive, in spite of these metropolitan exhortations; and there was no blushing in running away, as far as he was concerned. When the frost of an early winter had iced the stream, so as to admit of an easy passage, he retreated from its brink, or, more properly, fled in consternation from its margin. We may wonder that no one struck down the dastard. But the people had been trained to reverence blindly the son of Rurik, the descendant of St. Vladimir; and though their faith in his competency was shaken, it was not uprooted. He was so far removed by position from his herd of slaves, as to render it doubtful to their minds, whether they understood his policy, supposing them capable of such presumption as to question it; and they soon found cause not only to congratulate themselves upon being forbearing, but to feel self-reproach at having been distrustful. So much was this unworthy prince favoured by circumstances, that as he was disgracefully retreating, his ally, the Khan of the Crimea, attacked the Golden Camp, compelling the Tatars of the Horde to return precipitately to defend their own territory. But their capital was ravaged before they reached it, while, becoming disorderly on the homeward march, the army was cut to pieces by a hetman of the Cossacks and a chief of the Nogays. Thus was Russia free from a menacing enemy and a hated yoke; and, without striking a blow for the emancipation of his

country, to Ivan the whole credit of the exploit was ascribed. He had foreseen circumstances, and arranged events. So said his parasites, and so believed the crowd. He had been simply prudent therefore when deemed pusillanimous; and had been taking measures with consummate skill when thought incapable of decisive action. The tide of feeling turned abruptly and strongly in his favour; and the caitiff was henceforth honoured by servile priests and subjects as a second Providence, the saviour of the nation. He was not slow to turn such unexpected advantages to account, in trampling under foot every remaining relic of rival domestic authority, strengthening and extending his despotic sway.

The foundation of the modern Russian empire, with the establishment of its autocracy, was the work of this ignoble sovereign. It came into connection with Western Europe in his reign, and obtained a place in the family of European states. Envoys visited his court from the Pope, the republic of Venice, the king of Denmark, Maximilian king of the Romans; and the first alliance was formed between Russia and Austria. The representative of Denmark was "Master David," a Scotchman by birth, in the service of the Danish crown, who seems to have had the plebeian family name of Cocker. Russian envoys also found their way to Denmark by a circuitous route, sailing in small vessels from the White Sea, rounding the North Cape close in

shore, and travelling overland from Drontheim in Norway to the coast opposite Copenhagen. The European recognition of Russia as a political power dates from the marriage of Ivan, in 1472, with Sophia, his second wife, a princess of the imperial blood of Constantinople. She was the daughter of Thomas Paleologus Porphrygenitus, brother of Constantine Paleologus, the emperor who died sword in hand in the breach, when his capital was captured by the Turks. The lady took refuge at Rome under the protection of the Pope. The ambassadors who accompanied her from thence to Moscow, conveyed a throne of carved ivory, as a present for her husband, which is still preserved in the treasury of the Kremlin.

By virtue of this alliance Ivan conceived that the rights of the imperial family devolved to himself. The bride was therefore a prize of no little value. "God," said the obsequious priests, "sends him this illustrious spouse, an offset of that imperial tree, the shadow of which was formerly spread over all orthodox Christian brothers. Fortunate alliance! which brings to mind that of the great Vladimir, and which will make another Byzantium of Moscow, and give to its grand-princes all the rights of the Greek emperors." The marriage vastly strengthened his power. As the self-constituted heir to the throne of Constantinople, the capital of eastern Christendom, from whence Russia received the faith, his despotism seemed to be sanctified

by divine right, and he laid claim to the prerogative. "The high and holy Trinity," his proclamations began, "from whom we have received the government of all Russia:" to which fawning ecclesiastics responded "The empire which you hold from God himself." When his boyars demanded that he should give the crown to his grandson by the first wife, whom he had dispossessed in favour of a son by the second, he haughtily replied, "I will give to Russia whomsoever I please." Sophia brought as her dowry the double-headed black eagle of Byzantium, the type of the supreme power; and it was adopted as the cognizance of Russia, in place of the old St. George on horseback killing the dragon. The title of Czar or Tzar, signifying supreme authority, was regularly assumed from this period by the sovereigns, though it occurs occasionally at an earlier date. The name is not a corruption of Cæsar, but an orientalism, derived from the Sclavonic bible, found at the termination of the names of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, as those of Nabonassar and Belshazzar.

As the representative of the majesty of the Greek empire, Ivan placed himself upon a perfect equality with the highest of the European powers. So apprehensive was he of being considered the upstart monarch of an uncivilised race just escaped from vassalage, that the most rigorous attention to petty punctilios was required of the foreign envoys who approached his person,

while his tone was haughty, even insolent, to contemporary princes. The Turks of Kaffa in the Crimea, having plundered some Russian merchants, he wrote to Sultan Bajazet in the following terms:—"Whence arise these acts of violence? Are you aware of them, or are you not? One word more. Mohammed, your father, was a great prince. He designed to send ambassadors to compliment me. God opposed the execution of the project. Why should we not now see the accomplishment of it?" Desirous of corresponding his court and capital to the fancied dignity of his position, he sought to reproduce in Moscow the architectural glories and costly pageants for which Constantinople, under the empire, was renowned. Artificers, engineers, founders, and minters from abroad were invited to settle in his dominions. The massive walls of the Kremlin, the stronghold of autocracy, arose under the direction of Aristotle of Bologna; and the first church of stone within its circuit, which had baffled the native architects, having thrice fallen through their unskilfulness, was completed by foreign aid. Cannon were founded; and the mines of the Petchora, being discovered in 1491, Russia had, for the first time, silver and copper money, the produce of its own territory, coined in the capital. But the prince and his court remained essentially barbaric, displaying a spectacle of savage power and costly brutality. At the public entertainments the vessels might be silver or gold; but chief and

nobles were alike coarse beyond description in their manners and beastly in their revellings. Upon the death of the heir-apparent in 1490, his unlucky foreign physician, Leo, was publicly beheaded.

Though a poltroon in the camp, Ivan was bold in the cabinet, and severe in his general bearing, yet not cruel except as the last resort of tyranny. It is said that a single glance, when he was excited with anger, would make a timid woman swoon; that petitioners dared not to approach his throne; and that even at his table the grandees trembled before him. He was the author of a code which sanctioned single combat in criminal accusations; allowed of torture in cases of suspicion; and punished different offences by confiscation, the knout, slavery in the mines, and death. But it allowed to the peasants the privilege of passing from one village to another at a stated annual period, or of changing their lords, the subsequent abolition of which converted them into slaves. Ivan died in the autumn of 1505, after a reign of forty-three years, and was succeeded by his son, Vassali V. This prince met with great reverses in war, but surmounted them by adopting the crafty arts of his father, and preserved intact the extraordinary despotism bequeathed to him. It had an intelligent witness in Herberstein, who twice visited Moscow, in 1517 and 1526, on missions from the Emperor Maximilian and the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria. The ambassador has left on record his impressions of

the court, the country, and the people. The latter, according to his testimony, not only submitted with abject servility to the will of the prince, but deemed it religiously right to do so, and doated upon the subjection. He was in their esteem "God's key-bearer and chamberlain," the treasurer and executor of the divine purposes. "God and the grand-prince know," was the ordinary answer given to inquiries respecting doubtful matters. Herberstein was dubious upon the point, whether the brutality of the subjects had made the prince a tyrant, or whether the tyranny of the prince had brutalised the subjects. Despotism was stamped upon their very bread. Cakes were distributed to the poorer people shaped like a yoke, to remind those who ate them of their servile condition.

The brutal treatment of women was common, and not confined to persons of humble rank. Vassali married a subject for his first wife, but, being childless, he repudiated her, and transferred the unhappy lady from a palace to a convent. When the metropolitan, upon her arrival weeping and sobbing, cut off her hair, and then offered to put on the hood, she indignantly hurled it to the ground, and stamped upon it with her feet. One of the bystanders, a noble, not only reviled her bitterly, but beat her with a scourge, saying, "Darest thou resist the will of my lord? and delayest to obey his commands?" Inquiring by what authority he thus treated her, he replied, "by the will of his

lord;" upon which she protested in the presence of all that the hood was taken under compulsion, and invoked the vengeance of God for so great an injury.

"The prince," says Herberstein, "generally orders his goblet to be presented to him once or twice, and after drinking from it he calls the ambassadors to him in rotation and says, 'Leonhard' or 'Sigismund,' as the case may be, 'thou hast come from a great sovereign to a great sovereign; thou hast made a great journey; after thou hast experienced our favour it shall be well with thee; drink and drink well, and eat well, even to thy heart's content, and then take thy rest, that thou mayst at length return to thy master.' The prince often honours his guests by sending them dishes and drink. He never meddles with matters of serious moment during dinner; but when the dinner is over it is his custom to say to the ambassadors, 'Now you may depart.' When thus dismissed, they are escorted back to their hotels by the same persons who had conducted them to the palace, who state that they have orders to remain with them in the hotel to make merry with them. Silver goblets and various other vessels containing liquor are then produced, and all strive to make each other drunk; and very clever they are in finding excuses for inviting men to drink. He who wishes to escape too long a drinking-bout must pretend that he is drunk or sleepy, or at least declare that, having already emptied many cups, he cannot drink any more; for they

do not think their guests are well received or hospitably treated unless they are sent home drunk." Every drinker took his potation standing, and then turned the empty cup upside down over his head in proof of its emptiness,—a custom introduced into England and Scotland by the Cavaliers, many of whom had served abroad. Nearly all the houses in Moscow were of wood; and, having been numbered a few years before the ambassador's visit, they were found to exceed 41,500, exclusive of the adjacent monasteries. All justice was venal, with little attempt at concealment. The testimony of a noble was worth more than that of a multitude of low condition. Vassali, though most unsuccessful in his wars, was constantly praised by his courtiers as if he had brought things to a happy issue; and when more than half the army had perished in the field, they stoutly maintained that not a man had been lost in battle. The Russia of the nineteenth century closely corresponds in many of these features to the Russia of the sixteenth.

CHAP. III.

THE REIGN OF TERROR.

IVAN IV. — MINORITY OF THE PRINCE. — EARLY PERIOD OF THE REIGN. — SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF KASAN. — CHURCH OF THE PROTECTION OF MARY. — CONQUEST OF ASTRACHAN. — A TEMPTER. — IVAN BECOMES THE "TERRIBLE." — HIS BLASPHEMOUS PRETENSIONS. — CORRESPONDENCE WITH PRINCE KURBSKY. — DEPARTURE FROM MOSCOW. — RETURN TO THE CAPITAL. — INSTITUTION OF THE STRELITZ. — WANTON CRUELTY. — THE TYRANT OF ALEXANDROVSKY. — MASSACRES AT NOVGOROD. — BURNING OF MOSCOW. — COWARDICE OF IVAN. — HIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH QUEEN ELIZABETH. — MURDER OF HIS SON. — TOMBS OF THE CZARS.

TWENTY-EIGHT years after the death of the third Ivan, or in 1533, the monarchy devolved to the fourth of the name, a grandson and a minor. There had been little alteration in its condition, and no events of interest in the interval, except a revolt of the Tatars of Kasan, who in conjunction with their brethren in the Crimea, threatened the integrity of the state, and conducted their ravages to the gates of Moscow. Though eventually repressed, they remained turbulent; and at once reasserted their independence, restoring their khan, when the throne of Russia descended to Ivan IV., a child only three years of age. This boy survived a stormy pupilage to confirm the power of his country,

and extend its limits, then becoming its scourge and curse. Posterity has distinguished him by the ominous appellation of the Terrible; and without exception, in the list of tyrants with which nations have been harassed, there is no example of a despot so original,—a monster so tremendous. We must throw together a Nero, a Commodus, a Louis XI., and Henry VIII. in order to produce his likeness. Even then the resemblance will not be perfect, without adding the features of a sanctimonious monk, familiar with scraps of divinity, and prone to quote them with that characteristic mark by which Antichrist is known, — a blasphemous self-exaltation to the high seat of the Divine Majesty. The adage of truth being stranger than fiction applies emphatically to his career; for all that fancy ever feigned of the fiendish in the actions of men, and of the horrible in the sufferings of their victims, meets us with surpassing effect in his crimes.

Three principal periods may be noted in the career of Ivan, whose reign is the longest in the Russian annals, — the time of his minority, that of his first marriage, and the subsequent interval.

The scenes with which he was familiar in early life prepared him for the brutal exercise of power; and intensely strengthened, if they did not originate, the demoniacal passions afterwards so fearfully displayed. Helena, his mother, held the office of regent, the only instance of a female being at the head of the state

since the time of the implacable Olga. She abandoned herself openly to abominable pleasures, and raised a paramour to share her authority, till a sudden death, supposed to be the effect of poison administered by discontented or aspiring nobles, terminated a disgraceful career. The grandees then seized the government; and having been kept down by the vigorous hands of the two preceding czars, they rioted in the abuse of rule, without a check, except that which their mutual jealousies supplied. Meanwhile the prince was utterly neglected. No instruction was provided for him; and he was carefully excluded from affairs of state, in order to be disqualified for his hereditary position, thereby prolonging to the nobles their term of authority. Insult was added to neglect; and even violence was offered to his person, the more thoroughly to degrade him. In these proceedings no one was more conspicuous than Prince Shuiski, the president of the council of boyars, who did not hesitate to intrude upon his rest, assail him with terrors in the night to overpower his mind, and inflict the ignominy of using his young master as a footstool, making him bear the burden of his feet. Thus treated, Ivan sought relief in the occupations most congenial to his own inclinations; and employed his time in the torture of wild animals, precipitating dogs and cats from the summit of the palace upon the passengers below, and riding over the aged and infirm in the streets. At length, when

only in his fourteenth year, he was roused by a designing noble to act against his taskmaster. Upon giving the preconcerted word at a hunting party, Shuiski was seized by the retainers, delivered over to the dogs, and worried to death in open daylight. Prince Glinsky, the party who instigated this overthrow of a rival, took his place; and encouraged the evil dispositions of the grand prince, to maintain his own ascendancy, till the populace of Moscow rose, wreaked their vengeance upon the unprincipled boyar, and fired the city in their despair.

In the midst of this social chaos, Sylvester, a monk, presented himself to Ivan; and with the Gospel in one hand, menaced him with the vengeance of heaven unless he altered his course. Already sufficiently alarmed by the conflagration and the clamour, the words and the look of the ecclesiastic cowed him into a resolution to reform; and in his eighteenth year, 1547, he became czar of all the Russias, under hopeful circumstances. He dismissed interested and obnoxious counsellors; appointed the wise and virtuous Alexis Adascheff in their place; and took for his wife the beautiful and gentle Anastasia, daughter of Roman Yuryvitch, who exercised the most beneficial influence upon his character and conduct. Under the new administration, private interests were made to give way to the public good; the prerogatives of the nobles were restricted; the greediness of the church was

restrained; the cruel and senseless practices which had descended from pagan times were prohibited; military services were regulated; persons and property were equitably assessed for the support of the state; and fees to procure justice were abolished. It was probably during this interval that Ivan acquired his scholarship, for all his letters were written with his own hand; and he had some historical knowledge, with other literary acquirements, of which he was not a little vain.

This second period of the reign, which lasted thirteen years, was marked with outbreaks of a ferocious spirit on the part of the czar; but they were only occasional, and afforded little indication of subsequent tiger-like displays. In 1552 he proceeded at the head of a numerous army to reduce the Tatars of Kasan; and exhibited in the campaign that strange blending of the religious purist and the savage which was so characteristic of him in after life. The siege of the city lasted nearly two months, and was on both sides a sanguinary struggle. To every overture to surrender, the inhabitants firmly replied, "No citizen of Kasan will outlive his freedom;" and had it not been for the services of a stranger in the besieging army, mentioned in the chronicles under the title of Rosmúisl or inventor, the result would have been much longer delayed, if not altogether different. This person was a foreign engineer, who formed mines to blow up the walls, a process new to both Russians and

Tatars. When the mines were complete, and charged with powder, Ivan mustered his army on the adjoining plain, and ordered the soldiers to purify themselves by prayer for the baptism of blood. Divine service commenced; and as the priest uttered the words, "a flock only shall be his and a shepherd," the mines exploded, and laid the city open to the besiegers. Every step forward in the streets was now bought with blood. Upon reaching the palace, the khan Yediger, surrounded by a band of faithful adherents, bravely defended it till, driven to extremity, they surrendered him, exclaiming, "Take our ruler, and treat him as befits his rank; but we die with arms in our hands." It happened as they said; not one of the warriors survived the fall of the city; and with that event the independence of the nation terminated. Yediger was conveyed a prisoner to Moscow; the crown of Kasan was placed in the Kremlin, where it now remains; and in gratitude for his conquest, Ivan founded the church of the Protection of Mary in his capital. This is one of its most grotesque edifices, yet exactly calculated to please an uncultivated taste. Upon its completion, the founder was again a barbarian and a devotee. Delighted with the performance, he ran about the building in raptures, examined it in detail, called for the architect, an Italian, warmly thanked him, and then ordered the eyes of the unfortunate man to be put out, that he might never erect a rival structure.

The reduction of the Tatar kingdom of Astrachan followed that of the northern khanate in 1554. It was effected partly by treachery, and partly by force of arms, the expedition descending the Volga to the city on rafts and floats. This valuable conquest was incorporated with the empire, and led to the submission or emigration of all the adjacent tribes. It brought Russia into immediate connection with the Caspian, and, by means of the inland basin, with the Caucasus and Persia, besides transferring to it a district in which the vine is cultivable, and which was then famous for its fruits. Fifteen years later, the Tatars of the Crimea, in conjunction with the Turks, made an effort to recapture the prize; but it failed, and the bulk of the army perished in the inhospitable deserts of the Manitch. In addition to these successes, the Don Cossacks voluntarily placed themselves under the protection of the czar; intercourse was opened between England and Russia; and the reduction of Western Siberia was soon afterwards commenced. These events are of sufficient interest and importance to be detailed in a separate chapter. Had Ivan died at this period, or prior to the year 1560, history would have been spared a shocking recital, and his own name would have escaped an appalling appendage. Best, an Englishman, thus describes him in 1558:—"He is no more afraid of his enemies than the bobbie of the larks (bobbié, the lark-hawk, *Falco sub-*

buteo). I think no prince in Christendom is more feared of his own nobles and commons than he is, nor yet better beloved. He delighteth not greatly in hawking, hunting, or any other pastime, nor in hearing instruments of music, but setteth all his noble delight upon two things.—first to serve God, as undoubtedly he is very devout in his religion; and the second, how to subdue and conquer his enemies."

By this time a tempter had crossed the path of Ivan in the person of the ex-bishop of Kolomna, — a worthless old man, who had been deposed for his delinquencies, and was embittered against the boyars as the authors of his deposition. "If," said he, "you would be truly a monarch, never seek a counsellor wiser than yourself. Never receive advice from any man. Command, but never obey. Then you will be a real sovereign, and a terror to the boyars. Bear in mind that the counsellor of the wisest prince always ends by being his ruler." The words fell upon an attentive ear. They produced a profound impression, and were never forgotten. Ivan embraced the hoary villain, saying, "My own father could not have given me better advice."

The third period of the reign commenced upon the decease of the good Anastasia in 1560, and extended over twenty-four years to the death of Ivan. Freed from the restraining influence which she had unconsciously exerted, his vile passions acquired full expan-

sion. The fiend within, now the charmer was gone, started up from slumber,—a living thing—a masterful spirit—a horrible reality—combining the most savage cruelty and brutal lust with the strange addition of mock devotion. However revolting to dwell upon his career, it ought not to be passed over; for, besides being a chapter in the history of human nature, it is evidence of the astonishing servility of the Russian mind that such a monster could be endured a twelvemonth. But more than toleration was exemplified. So thoroughly abject and blinded were the mass of the people, that they willingly offered their heads to the stroke if the czar demanded them, treated his slashing them with the knife as heavenly punishments, believing in his indisputable right as a God-sent sovereign to do as he pleased, and that even in his most wicked deeds he was but accomplishing his divine mission as their only legitimate master and lord. In fact, he armed himself with crushing authority over the besotted multitude by identifying himself with the Deity. "I am your god," thundered he to his subjects, "as God is mine; whose throne, like that of the Omnipotent, is surrounded by winged archangels, and who sends forth armies of three hundred thousand men and two hundred cannon against his enemies." The metropolitan had indeed the courage on one occasion to rebuke this blasphemy. "We respect you," said he, "as an image of the Divinity, but as a man you partake of the dust of

the earth." It has been charitably supposed by some that Ivan was a lunatic; but he always strongly displayed the reasoning faculty, while there was a system in his tyranny which removes from his conduct the shield of insanity.

Dismissing the men who had prudently conducted the government, and surrounding himself with an unprincipled class, Ivan began the dreadful part of his reign by striking terror into the nobles. Recollecting the insults and injuries he had received in his youth from the great boyars, the entire order seemed to his exasperated mind convicted of a vast and permanent conspiracy against him, and he fell upon its members with the fury of an avenging demon. After one and another had been sacrificed, Prince Kurbsky, a patriotic, praiseworthy man, received timely warning that he was destined to share their fate, and escaped beyond the frontier, placing himself under the protection of Sigismond, king of Poland. He then addressed a letter to Ivan, charging him with shedding the blood of the elders of Israel in the temples of the Lord,—alluding to a noble who had been assassinated at prayers in a church for refusing to countenance the licentious orgies of the court; and threatened him with having to meet the men he had murdered at the tribunal of the Almighty. The letter and the reply to it are extant. In the latter, the despot ludicrously regards the flight of the prince to save his head as a revolt from a glorious

death, upon the presumption of his innocence, and, in any case, as a sin against Divine right, which must inevitably imperil his soul. He reminds him also of the vanity of life, to induce him to come and give it up. This is very characteristic of the extraordinary tyrant, who generally expatiated to his victims upon the uncertainties of this world, when dooming them to depart from it in a miserable way to another. "Why, thou wretch," wrote he, "dost thou destroy thy traitor soul in saving by flight thy worthless body? If thou art really honest and virtuous, why not die by the hand of thy master, and thereby obtain the crown of the martyrs? What is life? What are earthly pomps and riches? Vanity!—a shadow! What thou assertest of my assumed cruelties is an impudent lie. I do not destroy the elders of Israel, nor do I stain with their blood the Lord's temples. The peaceful and the religious live happily in my service. Against traitors alone I am severe: but who ever spared them? Did not Constantine the Great sacrifice his only son? Thou tellest me that I never again shall see thy Ethiop face. Heavens!—what a misfortune! Thou surroundest the throne of the Highest with those I have put to death,—a new heresy! 'No one,' saith the apostle, 'can see God.' But I am silent, for Solomon forbids us to waste words on fools like thee." This homily did not conciliate Kurbsky to recross the frontier. His alliance with the King of Poland, at that

time a powerful sovereign, and one of the most formidable foes of Russia, inspired Ivan with mingled consternation and fury; for, from the moment that he began to act the part of a sanguinary tyrant, he became a coward, and fear multiplied the number of his executions, as it perpetually presented to his mind the phantasms of conspiracy.

Suddenly a rumour spread through Moscow that the czar intended to leave the city, though no one knew with what design, or the place of his destination. One morning in winter, 1565, the court of the Kremlin appeared crowded with sledges laden with furniture, a multitude of crosses, images, and relics of saints. The populace assembled, and gazed in silence upon preparations for an unknown object, though evidently a journey. Ivan descended from the palace with the members of his household. His aspect was solemn and sad. After attending mass in the Church of the Assumption, and receiving the blessing of the metropolitan, he proceeded slowly through the throng to his sledge, held out his hand to the people in token of farewell, and drove off out of the city. The inhabitants were deeply moved by the event. His onslaught on the nobility had rather made him popular than otherwise with the multitude, and the spectacle had been got up to produce an impression. Such was their infatuated fanaticism, that they deemed themselves deserted of Heaven, being deprived of their legitimate guardian. "The czar," they

exclaimed, "has forsaken us, and we are lost! Who will now defend us against the enemy? What are sheep without the shepherd?". This was exactly the state of feeling that Ivan wished to produce. A month elapsed, without the slightest knowledge transpiring whither he had gone. Then two letters arrived, one addressed to the metropolitan, the other to the people. He recapitulated in them the crimes of the grandees during the period of his minority, declared that similar projects against his person and the majesty of the state were still entertained, complained of being thwarted by the interference of the clergy in rectifying such disorders, assured the people of his goodwill to them, and ended by avowing with a sorrowful heart his resignation of a government so assailed with traitors. The letters revealed his retreat. This was Alexandrovsky, a fortress buried in the gloom of woods, to the north of the capital, now a town in the government of Vladimir.

These communications heightened the feeling of the populace in his favour. It rose to a pitch of frenzy. "Let him," said they, "punish all those who deserve it. Has he not the power of life and death? The state cannot remain without a head, and we will not acknowledge any other than the one God has given us. Without him, who could preserve the purity of religion? Who could save millions of souls from eternal perdition?". All hastened by a deputation to humble

themselves before the retired solitary, and beseech the monarch by Divine ordination, the head of the orthodox church, to alter his purpose and return to the capital. Ivan feigned reluctance, and then cursed the dastards by acceding to their prayer. But he exacted first the artful condition of non-interference with the measures he might deem necessary for the security of the state, to which even the clergy pledged themselves, and thus secured a public sanction for the vilest despotism. On returning to Moscow the people were struck with astonishment at his altered appearance — a stratagem to win sympathy, and the effect of tumultuous passions. He had parted with his luxuriant locks and flowing beard; his face was pale and shrunk, and his whole frame attenuated.

The guilty conscience and infernal aims of Ivan led him to institute a permanent military force for the protection of his person and the perpetration of diabolical deeds. He organised a body guard of 6000 men, under the name of Opritsknina, the select legion, professing, when the project was first started, to enlist none but men of noble birth, but really enrolling persons of the lowest class, prepared to act the part of spies, informers, assassins, and executioners. Their duty was to denounce the disaffected to the sovereign, and carry into effect his sentence, which generally alternated between the doom of being drowned in a river or that of being devoured by bears, wolves, or dogs. The effects of the

accused being confiscated for the benefit of the accuser, it may readily be imagined that the numbers denounced were not few, and that most of them were innocent parties. These myrmidons bore a dog's head and broom suspended at the saddle bow, as types of their office. The former was intended to show that they worried the enemies of the czar, and the latter that they swept them from the face of the earth. From this truly select legion, the militia of fusileers seems to have sprung, better known under the name of Strelitz, who finally became to Moscow what the pretorian guards were to Rome, and the janissaries to Constantinople. Until the establishment of this corps, the military force of the empire was raised as occasion required, by the nobles bringing retainers into the field, in numbers proportioned to their importance and wealth. The standing army of Russia, now maintained upon so vast a scale, dates from the organisation of the Strelitz.

Cruelty, from being an act of vengeance, became to Ivan a recreation. Nothing delighted him more than to have bears let slip at his signal in the streets, whenever a group of citizens collected, while he watched the flight of the terrified crowd, or the struggles of those who were clutched by the animals. "God save thee, my dear Boris," said he to a boyar who reverentially approached him; "thou deservest a proof of my favour." With this, he took up a knife, and cut off one of his

ears; while the unhappy wretch, not daring to show the least sign of pain, humbly thanked the czar, and wished him a happy reign. Prince Grosedef, the court jester, uttering an unfortunate joke, he emptied a basin of boiling soup over his head; and upon his attempting to retreat from the table, he at once cut him down. "Preserve my faithful servant," cried the czar to a physician, "I have jested a little too hard with him." "So hard," replied he, "that only God and your majesty can restore him to life: he breathes no more." While fertile in inventing new modes of punishment, he was not content with single victims and ordinary crimes. Whole villages and towns were destroyed upon the most frivolous pretexts; 800 women were drowned at once in a river; sons were required to be parricides, and brothers fratricides.

Notwithstanding his body-guard, Ivan was not at ease in the city. The gloomy solitude of Alexandrovsky was more in harmony with his notions of security, and horrible employments, than the streets of Moscow, while more congenial to his own dark mind. He once more retreated thither. It became to him as Capri to Tiberius, and Plessis to Louis XI.—a spot where he could plan his villanies and torment his captives without interruption. A small town arose in the neighbourhood of the fortress to accommodate his legionaries, attendants, and the necessary traders, which no person was allowed to enter or depart from

without his permission. A patrol was constantly on the alert in the whole district to seize upon intruders. Either from caprice, or further to fortify himself with the aid of religion, he converted the fortress into a monastery, turned his favourites into monks habited in black vestments, and assumed himself the name and duties of abbot. Here his daily life was diversified with church service, issuing merciless orders, hunting wild beasts in the forest, and descending into the dungeons to superintend the interrogation of his prisoners by torture.

The crowning atrocity occurred in 1570. This was the desolation of Novgorod, the inhabitants of which were accused of having made an offer of their allegiance to the king of Poland. A forged letter was produced to support the charge; but no evidence of guilt was needed, with such a wealthy prize in view. Ivan set out from Alexandrovsky, at the head of his guards, to inflict punishment. On the road he massacred the citizens of Tver, had the metropolitan strangled in a cell of his own monastery, and wasted the country with fire and sword to the shores of lake Ilmen. Upon the van of the army reaching the devoted city, January 2., preparations were made for the arrival of the avenger. The churches and monasteries were closed, the ecclesiastics and citizens were compelled to pay a fine or be flogged, and the houses were placed under guard. Five days afterwards the Terrible

crossed the bridge of the Volkhof, where the archbishop met him with the usual benediction, to which he responded with an ominous anathema. The cathedral, churches, and monasteries were sacked; the dwellings and shops were pillaged; the people, high and low, young and old, men and women, were indiscriminately destroyed. Some perished under the weapons of the soldiery; others were driven to the Volkhof, the ice of which was cut to admit of their being drowned; and others were flung from the bridge into the water. Daily, from 500 to 1000 Novgorodians were brought before Ivan and his son, and consigned to a miserable death. The total number of victims is mentioned at 60,000. Having wearied himself with slaughter, and turned the city into a bloody desert, he assembled the few wretched and despairing survivors, graciously granted them mercy, and withdrew, recommending himself to their prayers, that he might have a long and happy reign! He did not fail, however, to carry away a train of distinguished prisoners, among whom was the archbishop, in order that Moscow might see his justice in their execution. The preparations for this close of the dreadful drama included the erection of eighteen gibbets in the market-place, with a fire in the centre, over which a large copper caldron was placed. But the terrified population either kept to their houses or left the city, upon which Ivan, not to be disappointed of spectators, had them collected by force of

arms, to behold the condemned undergo their fate, some being thrown alive into the boiling caldron.

While distracted and enfeebled by these enormities, the external enemies of the country availed themselves of an opportunity so favourable for aggrandisement; and at every rumour of invasion, or foreign menace, Ivan was perfectly crest-fallen. So alarmed did he become for his own safety as to contemplate the possibility of being compelled to fly from his own dominions. In anticipation of this event, he formally proposed to enter into a treaty of friendship with Elizabeth of England, to be ratified on oath between them, one article of which, to be kept secret, was to the effect, that either sovereign might take refuge in the country of the other in case of overwhelming disturbances in their own realm. How the queen and her cabinet must have laughed! She readily promised him an English asylum, but tacitly declined to entertain the offer of a Muscovite one for herself. The year 1571 was a most calamitous period for Russia. A famine prevailed so fearfully, that the people were driven in many places to feed on human flesh to appease the pangs of hunger. The plague followed; and next came Devlet Gherai, with a host of Tatars from the Crimea. The invaders advanced to Moscow; and having set fire to several houses in the suburbs, the city was in a few hours so completely reduced to ashes that, as an English resident wrote, not a post was left

to which a horse could be tied. 100,000 men, citizens and fugitives from the surrounding country, were burnt or smothered in the stone churches and cellars, or drowned in the Moskva. The famine, the plague, the fire, and the sword were fatal to more than half-a-million lives. At this awful crisis, Ivan ensconced himself on the high road to Vologda, from whence he could proceed to the White Sea, and, in case of necessity, escape in a merchantman to England.

In the early part of the reign, under the administration of Adasheff, that minister contemplated gaining for Russia an outlet in the Baltic, and the means of communication with Europe. Narva, Dorpat, with other towns, were taken. But these advantages were now lost. Sweden overran the whole of Esthonia, and from thence to the lake Ladoga; Battori, king of Poland, the successor of Sigismond, possessed himself of Livonia; and Kettler, the last grand master of the Teutonic Knights, held Courland. Ivan indeed raised a vast army for defensive purposes; but he did not dare to command it, and nothing was effected. His mind was so debased by tyranny, that he descended to the most abject self-humiliation in order to ward off the hostility of Battori. For this purpose he employed the mediation of the Jesuit Possevin, an envoy of Rome, whose good offices he secured by holding out the prospect of Russia becoming Roman Catholic. His vile spirit grovelled before the Polish king, when the

latter, in an extant letter, charged him with being a monster who tortured his subjects, and a forger who falsified the articles of treaties. "Where are you," said Battori, "God of the Russians, as you compel your unfortunate slaves to call you?" With this missive, he sent him a challenge to single combat. Dastardly prostration formed the reply.

Though the canons of the church allowed with difficulty of a third marriage, and absolutely forbade a fourth, yet Ivan, who placed himself above all laws, human and divine, married seven wives, and wanted an eighth. He aspired to the hand of Elizabeth, and flattered himself with the certainty of gaining it. The treaty of friendship, before mentioned, was proposed as "the beginning of further matter to be done," alluding to his connubial aspirations. He took Jenkinson, an English agent, to his apartment by a secret passage, and confided to him his matrimonial views, to be transmitted to the queen. But Elizabeth, in all her communications, was significantly silent touching these advances, though she wrote freely concerning trade and commerce. The czar sulked for a time over these defective missives; then he growled like a bear; and next officially complained, that "you flowe in your maidenlie estate," and overlooking our "great affaires," concern yourself about "marchants affaires." Bomel, a German, who had been educated as a physician in England, and removed from thence to Russia, fanned

the flame by representing the queen as young. He was an unprincipled knave, horribly punished, being detected in a political intrigue. While his limbs were disjointed on the rack, wire whips cut the flesh from his bones, till, upon confession being extorted, the czar ordered him to be roasted. The miserable wretch was accordingly thrown on the fire. As he was carried off in a sledge, in order to be cast into a grave, Horsey, an Englishman, observed that life was still in him, for he opened his eyes, and uttered the name of Christ. Hopeless of obtaining the English queen for his eighth wife, Ivan's attention was directed to one of her subjects for the match, Lady Mary Hastings, daughter of the Earl of Huntingdon; but fortunately for the lady, he died while entertaining the project.

It is remarkable that such a being should die a natural death. Yet it was one of horrors. During the siege of Pskov by the Poles, his eldest and favourite son requested the command of a few troops in order to march to its relief. The proposal suggested the thought of conspiracy to the father, and he became furious. "Rebel!" said he, "you are leagued with the boyars in a conspiracy to dethrone me;" so saying, he struck him a mortal blow with his iron-pointed staff. The prince expired upon the spot. Ivan was instantly sensible of the enormity of the deed, and of having destroyed the only one of his sons fit to occupy the throne. Remorse seized him, but without repentance,

for the ruling passions of his mind were still strong in death. To the last he continued to order executions, and his own daughter-in-law was compelled to leave him to avoid licentious advances. Yet it is not less strange than true, that, in compliance with the Ordinary mode of preparation for death prescribed by the church, he was consecrated a monk in his last hours under the name of Father Jonas. He died at Alexandrovsky, March 19. 1584, after having been czar fifty-one years. The father and son, murderer and murdered, lie side by side in the church of the Archangel Michael, within the limits of the Kremlin. Here are the tombs of the sovereigns of the lines of Rurik and Romanoff, down to the foundation of St. Petersburgh, the usurpers being excluded. Their portraits, large as life, are painted on the walls; but they are not likenesses, having apparently been copied from a common pattern. Each, wrapped in a white mantle, appears by his own tomb, as if watching it. Their names, parentage, years of birth and death, are commonly given in inscriptions. Among the incongruities of Russia, the inscription commemorating Ivan the Terrible is not the least remarkable. After stating that he "departed in the year of the world 7092, and in the year after Christ 1584, in the month of March, on the 19th day," it styles this scourge of his race and paragon of monsters, "the *orthodox and Christ-loving Lord!* the Lord Czar, Ruler and General of all the Russians."

CHAP IV.

ENGLAND—THE CAUCASUS—SIBERIA.

NORTH-EAST VOYAGES.—FATE OF SIR HUGH WILLOUGHBY.—RICHARD CHANCELLOR LANDS IN RUSSIA.—FIRST ENGLISH AT MOSCOW.—RUSSIAN COMPANY FORMED.—CHANCELLOR'S SECOND VOYAGE.—FIRST RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR IN ENGLAND.—FIRST RUSSIAN MERCHANTS.—EXPORTS AND IMPORTS.—FIRST BOOK PRINTED AT MOSCOW.—TRAVELS OF JENKINSON.—RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN THE CAUCASUS.—SIBERIA.—INVADED BY THE COSSACKS.—CONQUESTS OF YERMAK.—HIS DEATH IN THE IRTISH.—ENGLISH VESSEL IN THE OBI.—RUSSIANS RE-ENTER SIBERIA.—THEIR RAPID PROGRESS.—BRITISH AND RUSSIAN JUBILEE.

THE Reign of Terror, notwithstanding its horrors, is of great interest and vast importance in the history of Russia. During that period the country came into connection with England, the Caspian, and the Caucasus; the port of Archangel was founded; the printing-press was introduced to Moscow; and western Siberia was discovered and conquered. It was in the reign of Edward VI. that Sebastian Cabot, who had been appointed grand pilot of England, proposed a voyage to the north and north-east, around Europe and Asia, for the purpose of reaching the celebrated regions of India and China. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks, and the discovery of the passage by the

Cape of Good Hope, had broke up the ancient channels of Oriental commerce, and thrown the carrying-trade between the east and west almost entirely into the hands of the Portuguese, with whose naval strength the English did not feel themselves competent to cope. This circumstance roused their merchant adventurers to endeavour to find out a new, and perhaps an easier, route in the direction stated. The obstacles to such an undertaking could not then be appreciated. Nothing was known of the immense breadth of Asia, or of its northerly extension, and of the enormous masses of ice with which its polar shores are encumbered. But though the expedition dispatched failed in its specific design, and was attended with a melancholy disaster, yet, like almost every other great effort of industry, it was crowned with unexpected positive advantages. England, while seeking a north-east passage to China, found the way to Russia; and the exchange of commodities between the two countries was rapidly grafted upon the acquaintance, with diplomatic relations between the courts of London and Moscow.

The youthful Edward was near his end at Greenwich, May 11th, 1553, when three vessels passed the palace from Deptford, under the command of Sir Hugh Willoughby, destined for the northern seas. They parted company at the close of July, owing to a tempest in the neighbourhood of the North Cape. After beating about on the ocean for nearly two

months, the commander, with a companion ship, entered a harbour of Russian Lapland, and took the fatal resolve of spending the winter in it, uninformed by experience, and imperfectly so by report, of its rigour. The season came on early, and proved more than ordinarily severe. The next spring, when the fishermen, who spend the winter months in the interior, returned to the coast, the two crews, numbering sixty-five men, were found stiffened corpses, still partly buried beneath the drifted snow in the frozen-up vessels. Meanwhile, the third ship, under Richard Chancellor, which the storm had separated from the others, was more fortunate. She entered the White Sea, and reached the mouth of the Dwina, where about fifty persons landed at an inhabited site. Nenocksa, near the convent of the miracle-working St. Nicholas, was the place where, for the first time, 24th August, Russian bread and salt, as the symbols of friendship, were placed before the English. The strangers learned that the country in which they had arrived was Muscovy, then under the government of Ivan Vasilovitch.

With several of his companions, Chancellor ascended the Dwina to the town of Cholmogory, where the chief magistrate of the district resided, who sent tidings of the event to Moscow. But, without waiting for the permission of the czar, the adventurer started in a sledge for the capital, accompanied by two countrymen, George Burton and Arthur Edwards. They arrived

in the depth of winter, and were the first English visitors to the Kremlin. Ivan received them favourably. At a formal audience, an open letter was handed to him from Edward VI., of which several copies had been supplied to each vessel of the expedition, in different languages. It expressed an earnest desire to enter into treaties of commerce with any countries, previously unknown, that might be discovered. Chancellor, Burton, and Edwards were admitted to the czar's table; and, in compliance with their request, he entrusted them with a letter to the king, their master, favourable to the establishment of commercial relations. It was dated February, 1554, "written in our lordly house and castle." The party quitted Moscow with it in the following month for the White Sea, sailed for England, and found Queen Mary upon the throne, to whom the letter was delivered. How striking the contrast between that time and the present as to the flight of intelligence! Edward's death at Greenwich, in July, 1553, was not known at Moscow in March, 1554, eight months afterwards. But in March, 1855, the death of Nicholas at St. Petersburg was known on the day of its occurrence in London and Paris.

Soon after Chancellor's return, a chartered company was formed, invested with exclusive privileges of trade with Russia. Five noble names are mentioned in the charter among its members, William, Marquis of Winchester; Henry, Earl of Arundel; John, Earl of

Bedford; William, Earl of Pembroke; and William, Lord Howard of Effingham. The same ship, under the same commander, with a cargo of goods, and two merchants appointed resident commercial agents, reached the Dwina in 1555; and Chancellor, with the agents, proceeded to Moscow, bearing a letter for the czar from Queen Mary, written in Latin, Greek, and Italian. He received his visitors graciously, styling them *gosti korabelinge*, "naval guests." At dinner, they were placed at a table opposite to him, and were individually noticed after the repast. Macarius, the metropolitan, was present. The agent Killingworth's beard was particularly admired. It was broad, strong, light-coloured, and five feet two inches in length. "That is a gift of God," remarked the metropolitan to his master. Ivan now authorised free-trade between the two countries; and it was arranged for English factories to be established at Cholmogory, Vologda, and Moscow. In the following year, Ossip Nepeja, the boyar of Vologda, in the quality of ambassador, with a suite of sixteen of his countrymen, accompanied Chancellor on returning to his native shores. The voyage was most calamitous. Storms raged in the North Sea; and the vessel was wrecked in Pitsligo bay, Aberdeenshire. On this occasion Chancellor perished, and the ambassador was saved with great difficulty.

After some sore troubles and annoyances, the first

Russian envoy to England trod its soil at Berwick-upon-Tweed, February 18. 1557. Eighty merchants on horseback met him in great state when within twelve miles of London, and formed his escort to the city, getting up a fox-hunt for his amusement on the road. At the civic boundary, north of Smithfield, he was received by Lord Montague and the Lord Mayor, representing the court and corporation. Nepeja, notwithstanding the loss of many valuables by the shipwreck, was able to startle even the wealthy citizens by the barbaric pearl and gold of his attire. In the diary of Machyn, the merchant-tailor, an eye-witness of the "duke of Muskovea's" representative, he mentions the "high coping cap," and his "night-cap," perhaps a turban, adorned with "great pearls and rich stones as ever I did see." The ambassador, after being presented at court, and feasted at Guildhall, left England in May, having had all his expenses paid by the mercantile company. He was attended to his own country by the well-known, intelligent, and enterprising Arthur Jenkinson, who rose from the rank of a mere commercial agent to that of a diplomatist in the service of Queen Elizabeth. Ten years later, the first Russian merchants visited England, commissioned to procure costly articles for the czar's treasury by the exchange of furs. They brought a letter from him written in Russ and German: — "To the gracious and noble Queen, health. We have sent to your country

sundry of our merchants—namely, Stephen Tverdikoff, and Fedot Pognelvi, and with them we have sent wares from our treasury, in order that in your kingdom they may purchase sapphires, and rubies, and cloths, such as we require in our treasury. When these merchants arrive in your kingdom, we pray you to allow them to pass free with the wares which they take to your kingdom, as well as with those which they purchase from your subjects. Given under our hand at our palace of Moscow, in the year 7075 from the creation of the world, on the 10th of April, in the 34th year of our age, in the 20th of our reign over Russia, the 15th of that over Kasan, and the 13th of that over Astrachan." The merchants were accommodated in the house of the Russia company in Seething Lane, and had an interview with the queen at Oatlands. They were in London during the building of the first exchange, under the auspices of Sir Thomas Gresham.

The principal articles exported from England to Russia consisted at first of broadcloths, silk and cotton stuffs, trinkets, sugar, lead, gunpowder, and military stores. They were exchanged for furs, hides, hemp, flax, train-oil, tallow, pitch, tar, and masts. The supply of warlike implements, and more especially the introduction of artificers capable of manufacturing them, was a sore annoyance to Sigismond of Poland, who formally complained to the English queen upon the subject. He stated, in rather remarkable language,

that she was aiding " not only the temporary enemy of our kingdom, but the hereditary one of all free nations. The Muscovite," said he, " made more perfect in warlike affairs, with engines of war and ships, will slay or make bound all that shall withstand him." Seldom has an augury been more completely justified by the course of events. Paper is also mentioned among the early exports. It was probably obtained for the first book ever printed in Russia, " the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles," which appeared at Moscow in the year 1564. There is a copy of this rare work preserved in the library of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, which was accidentally found by a soldier, and presented to the academy in 1730. It contains a manifesto of the czar, relating the chief circumstances of the printing, too curious to be omitted : —

" By the will of the Father, the assistance of the Son, and the operation of the Holy Spirit. By order of the orthodox czar and Grand Duke of all the Russias, Ivan Vasilovitch; and by the benediction of Macarius, the most venerable metropolitan of all the Russias, many churches have been erected in Moscow, and its environs; and in all the cities of Russia, but chiefly in the city of Kasan, and in the country round about, which have been lately enlightened. These churches the orthodox czar has ornamented with venerable images, sacred books, moveables, and vestments, and other things belonging to public worship, according

to the traditions and rules of the apostles and blessed fathers, and the ordinances of the Greek emperors of blessed memory who have reigned at Constantinople, —Constantine the Great, Justinian, Michael, Theodore, and other pious princes. The orthodox czar and Grand Duke of all the Russias commanded also the sacred books, such as the Psalms, the Gospels, the Acts, and Epistles of the Apostles, and many others, to be purchased at the public marts, and distributed to the churches; but very few could be found that were correct and fit for use; the others being falsified and disfigured by the ignorance and inaccuracy of the copyists. Of this the czar had scarcely been informed before he thought of the means of causing books to be printed in his states, similar to those in Greece, at Venice, in Phrygia, or among other nations, in order to possess more correct copies of the sacred books; and having declared his intention to the most venerable metropolitan of all the Russias, the holy man rejoiced exceedingly, gave thanks to God, and assured the czar that he regarded the thought as a gift from heaven. Inquiry was accordingly made respecting the manner of printing, by order of the czar, and under the benediction of the metropolitan, in the year of the world 7061 (A.D. 1553), and the thirty-first of his reign. The orthodox czar afterwards caused a house to be builded at his own proper charge, designed for the printing; and advanced a sum out of the public treasury to the

workmen, Ivan Fedor, deacon of the church of the miraculous, Nicholas de Gostun, and Peter Timofeew Motislavzov, sufficient for the expenses of the printing, and for their own support until the work should be finished. The impression of the present book, which contains the Acts of the Apostles, the Catholic Epistles, and those of St. Paul, was begun on the 19th of April, the anniversary of the blessed father Ivan Palevret, in the year of the world 7071 (A.D. 1563), and was completed on the 1st of March, in the year of the world 7072 (A.D. 1564), being the first of the ministry of the archbishop and metropolitan Athanasius; in honour of the all-powerful and quickening Trinity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Though the more savage orgies of the reign had not commenced when this work was designed, they had begun when it was executed. The incongruity is not a little striking, that the same man who placed in the hands of his subjects a printed portion of the Scriptures in the mother-tongue, rioted in their blood, and governed them by means of the rack, the stake, the axe, and the hangman.

While the seamen of England continued for some time to prosecute the impracticable scheme of reaching China by a north-east passage, Jenkinson, the commercial agent, adopted the design of opening a mercantile road to it by means of the Volga, the Caspian, and

caravan routes through Bokhara. In pursuance of this object, having obtained permission of the czar, he started from Moscow in April 1558, and descended the great river to Astrachan. It was a year of famine, pestilence, and civil war to the Tatars in the neighbourhood. The country was largely depopulated, to the great satisfaction, the traveller remarks, of the Russians. So intense was the distress of the survivors, that they offered their children for sale at the price of a small loaf of bread apiece. Ramparts built of earth surrounded the city. All the houses were of the meanest description, except the governor's. Fish was the only food of the inhabitants, especially sturgeons. They were hung up in the streets and dwellings to dry, in consequence of which the air was infected; and the myriads of flies attracted to the carcasses formed an intolerable pest. Jenkinson gained the Caspian in August, and coasted it to the opposite side, exhibiting the St. George's cross at the head of his vessel. No Christian banner had ever before waved on its waters. From the eastern shore, he proceeded with a caravan of camels to the Oxus, and advanced as far as the city of Bokhara, where he learnt that the trade with China had been suspended by wars for upwards of three years. Thus disappointed in his principal object, he retraced his steps, and reached Moscow in September, 1559. A journey of seventeen months through unknown countries and lawless tribes, conducted with safety, is

in the highest degree creditable to the boldness and prudence of the traveller.

The Caspian was visited a second time by the enterprising agent, in 1662, in order to establish trade with the Persian provinces on its shores, and through them with the remoter east. Jenkinson, while obeying in this expedition the instructions of his mercantile masters, acted as a kind of political agent for the czar, who wished to extend his influence to the nations of the Caucasus. Ivan had recently married for his second wife the beautiful daughter of Michael, a Circassian prince, whose brother became one of his most ferocious bloodhounds. The singular fact is noted, that during the celebration of this marriage, the gates of Moscow were closed for three days, and no inhabitant, native or foreigner, was allowed to leave his house. The traveller wrote — "The cause thereof unto this day not being known." In the course of his journey, he met with an envoy of the Prince of Georgia, who declared the lamentable estate of his master, that being pressed by the Great Turk on the one hand, and the Sophy, or Shah of Persia, on the other, he was at his wits' end what to do, but had thoughts of putting himself under Russian protection. The Englishman strongly advised this step, much to the satisfaction of Ivan, to whom he duly reported the event upon his return. In consequence of negotiations immediately commenced, but not brought to an issue till the next

reign, Alexander, prince of Eastern Georgia, declared himself the vassal of Muscovy, relying upon military assistance from his northern liege lord, to cope with the Shah and the Sultan. It was soon needed, but never came. The new czar Feodore, more fit to be a monk than a sovereign, sent priests and painters to adorn the Georgian churches, instead of troops and cannon to defend the territory; and Alexander was compelled to become the liege-man of Shah Abbas. This was the first attempt made to establish Russian influence in the Caucasian region, in which a countryman of our own, who was also an accredited ambassador, took the initiative. Jenkinson, it may be added, whose travels made him acquainted with a large extent of Russia, prepared the first map of the country published in England, and was instructed by his employers to draw up a chart of the Caspian.

Though English goods found their way to Persia by the route indicated, and Oriental produce returned by the same channel, yet, after a short interval, the attempt to establish commercial intercourse in this direction was abandoned, owing to the disturbed state of the countries to be traversed. In fact, the scheme was marked by the ignorance not less than by the boldness of early mercantile enterprise, for it was speedily apparent that no goods could bear the cost entailed by the transport. Soon afterwards, it became unnecessary to seek mercantile communication with the

east through Russia, by our navy becoming familiar with the passage round the Cape of Good Hope. But a singular result was incidentally grafted upon these abortive overland enterprises. They were the means of introducing a conqueror for Russia into Siberia, and founding the Asiatic empire of the czars.

It was not till after the middle of the sixteenth century had passed, that the Russian government had permanent hold of any part of the vast region now known by the name of Siberia, or much knowledge of its most contiguous districts, though private individuals traded with the natives, and visited their western outposts. About the year 1517, Anika Stroganoff, founder of an existing noble family, established some salt-works at a town in the present province of Archangel, and commenced an important trade with the Samoiedes of the Obi. Toys and other articles of trifling value, calculated to please an ignorant people, were bartered for the choicest furs; by which means he rapidly amassed a considerable fortune, bought lands, planted other mercantile stations, and dispatched agents across the Uralian chain to conduct and extend the traffic. Perceiving the advantage that might accrue to his empire from increasing this commerce, Ivan patronised the enterprising merchant, and sent a body of troops to enlarge and protect the communication already opened with the country. The soldiers followed the routes of the traders, but did not

probably penetrate beyond the western branch of the Obi. A few Tatar chiefs submitted; and one of them, Yediger, sent an embassy to Moscow, consenting to pay an annual tribute of a thousand sables for permission to retain his government. This was prior to the year 1558, when the czar assumed the style of Lord of all the Siberian lands. The title was soon reduced to a dead letter, for Yediger was defeated, taken prisoner, and deprived of his territory by his neighbour, Kutchum Khan. This prince, a lineal descendant of Zenghis Khan, had recently founded a considerable empire, of which the capital was Isker, a town near the spot now occupied by Tobolsk.

While these events were transpiring, the English adventurers were busy in the attempt to establish their commerce on the Volga and the Caspian. But the predatory Cossacks and swarms of banditti along the course of the river plundered the merchants of their goods, and some of them lost their lives. So daring did they become, that the passage from Moscow to Astrachan was rendered unsafe to the envoys of the czar. He therefore sent a considerable force against the marauders. Numbers were slain in fight, many were taken prisoners and executed; while others, driven out of their usual haunts, roamed far and wide in quest of settlements favourable to a brigand life. Among the latter was a band of 6000 Cossacks, under the command of Yermak Trimof, a man who acted in Siberia the

part of Cortez in Mexico, attempting the most daring deeds with very limited means.

After desultory wanderings in the neighbourhood of the Urals, the chieftain reached one of the commercial stations of the Stroganoffs, governed by a grandson of the founder. Being hospitably received, he conducted himself with unexpected moderation, and fixed his winter quarters at the settlement. But Yermak's restless genius did not suffer him to remain long inactive; and upon his attention being directed to Siberia, he resolved to lead his followers thither, more intent perhaps upon pillage than conquest. Owing to the want of proper guides and requisite preparation for a long march, his first attempt was a failure. Upon a second expedition in 1579, he found his army so reduced by fatigue, sickness, and skirmishes, that it only numbered 1500 men. Yet with this small force he defeated Kutchum Khan in successive engagements, and wrested from him the sovereignty by a decisive victory near the junction of the Tobol river with the Irtish. So struck were the Tatars with the intrepidity of Yermak, that they deserted their own chief and submitted to his authority. His prudence as a conqueror corresponded to his boldness in attempting the conquest. Sensible of having no hold upon the affections of his new subjects, while his immediate followers had become a very scanty band, he made a tender of his new acquisitions to the Muscovite monarch, upon condition of receiving

prompt and effectual support. The ambassador who conveyed this application, backed by a present of the richest furs, was received by Ivan with the strongest marks of satisfaction. Yermak's pardon for his offences as a brigand was at once granted, the needed assistance was furnished, and *Te Deum* was celebrated in the cathedral of the capital.

Upon the arrival of reinforcements, Yermak extended his excursions on all sides, and reduced the neighbouring princes, till his dominion seemed firmly fixed. He made Isker his principal residence, and changed its name to that of Sibir. But a single act of inadvertence overthrew him. On a rainy night, when his soldiers were fatigued with a long march, he allowed them to repose without adopting adequate precautions against surprise. In these circumstances, Kutchum Khan, who was upon his rear, organised an attack. Silently advancing at midnight, he fell upon the Russians before they could seize their arms, and they were cut to pieces almost without opposition. The massacre of the party was so universal, that only one man is said to have escaped. Yermak, though he did not fall by the sword, perished in the rout. Having fought his way through the ranks of the enemy and gained the banks of the Irtish, he endeavoured to throw himself into a boat which lay near the shore; but stepping short, he fell into the river, and sank instantly, encumbered with the weight of his armour. His body, being recovered from

the stream, was ignominiously treated by order of Kutchum Khan. But the people clung to the remembrance of his courage, a quality which barbarians know how to appreciate, and quickly passed from the extreme of resentment to that of idolatrous reverence. They interred his remains at last with all the rites of pagan superstition, and offered sacrifices to his manes, a veneration which immensely facilitated the subsequent progress of the Russians in the region.

The conquests of Yermak proved fatal to some of our countrymen. About the year 1583, he captured one of the native princes, and sent him prisoner to Moscow. Here Horsey, the English agent, saw the "Sibirian emperor," and gathered from him, that but two years before, "such men of countenance as I was," with their ship, ordnance, powder, and other riches, had been taken in the river Obi. It was also reported from other sources that an English vessel had been wrecked in the river, and the unfortunate crew murdered by the Samoiedes, who mistook them for hostile visitors. These facts have only very recently been brought to light by the industry of Dr. Hamel. They elucidate the fate of the navigator Jackman, who was lost in 1581—the period referred to—while prosecuting the north-east passage. He had special instructions, if he wintered out, to sail up the Obi in the ensuing summer, and endeavour to reach the city of Sibir. As Yermak was then conducting hostilities in Siberia,

it is likely that the Samoiedes believed the shipwrecked strangers to be in alliance with him, and hence despatched them.

The bold Cossack may be regarded as the true founder of Asiatic Russia. He explored new and more practicable routes for the march of troops across inhospitable regions, and illustrated the facility with which a small number of resolute and well-armed men may reduce a spare, scattered, and unorganised population. Accordingly, though the Russians evacuated the country upon his death, a corps of 300 troops, chiefly Cossacks, quickly returned. Others followed and established themselves in forts, founding Tumen, on the Tara, in 1586, the first Russian city in Asia, and Tobolsk in 1587. The whole territory previously reduced was speedily recovered, and this success was the forerunner of still greater acquisitions. There are few more extraordinary events on the page of history, than the rapidity with which a Russian Asia was created. Without concentrating their energies in any one comprehensive plan of operation — with no known boundary before them — and with scarcely any assistance from Europe, where the government was distracted with political revolutions — the first colonists pushed eastward, securing the country by military posts as they advanced; and their successors, in little more than sixty years after the first invasion, had traversed the whole breadth of the continent as masters, and gazed upon the waters

of the Pacific Ocean. Surprise is moderated by the recollection that, while the conquerors were inferior in arts and arms to the Swedes, Poles, and other European nations, they were vastly superior to the Samoiedes, Ostiaks, Yakuts, Tunguses, and Tchouktski. The primitive colonists formed the ancient aristocracy of Siberia; but their descendants, though proud of their pedigree, are now as much below the European Russian nobles as the posterity of the first conquerors of Mexico were deemed inferior to the haughty officers of administration sent out from Spain.

In the year 1853, three centuries became complete since the commencement of intercourse between England and Russia. During this long interval, amicable relations had been maintained between the two nations, subject to very slight disturbance. In anticipation of the ter-centenary period, Dr. Hamel, a member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, and an official of the Russian government, writing in 1846, suggested a kind of jubilee in both countries on the three hundredth anniversary, commemorating so remarkable an example of almost uninterrupted national friendship, with its consequent benefits to trade, arts, and industry. He also proposed the erection of a monument of British and Russian granite, on the rocky lofty edge of Nokujeff island, in honour of Sir Hugh Willoughby, who commanded the first English expedition and perished in the adjoining harbour, as well as

of Cabot, who instigated the enterprise. It is curious to reflect that, instead of closer union and mutual courtesies marking the completion of the three centuries, diplomatic relations between the two countries ceased in 1853, followed by the deadly strife in which they are still engaged.

CHAP. V.

TRAGEDY OF THE DMITRIS.

IMPOSTURES. — SONS OF IVAN. — MURDER OF DEMETRIUS. — DEATH OF FEODORE. — USURPATION OF BORIS. — AN ADVENTURER IN POLAND. — CHARACTER OF THE FALSE DEMETRIUS — HIS SUCCESS AND PROJECTS. — STATE OF FEELING IN RUSSIA. — CONDUCT OF BORIS. — INVASION OF RUSSIA. — DEATH OF BORIS. — ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DEMETRIUS. — HIS ENTRANCE INTO MOSCOW — OWNED BY THE DOWAGER-CZARITZA. — THE CORONATION. — REIGN OF DEMETRIUS — HIS UNPOPULAR HABITS AND MANNERS — HIS MARRIAGE. — MURDER OF THE CZAR — TREATMENT OF HIS BODY. — SHUISKI. — SECOND FALSE DEMETRIUS. — TRIUMPH OF THE POLES — THEIR EXPULSION. — ACCESSION OF THE HOUSE OF ROMANOFF.

AMONG the endless varieties of imposture which have illustrated the cupidity or ambition of mankind, that of the personation of the dead, in order to lay claim to their station, honours, and wealth, is one of the most extraordinary. Though comparatively rare, it has occurred in most countries, and in almost all ages, sometimes under such peculiar circumstances as to appear prominently on the page of history. We have a Perkin Warbeck in our own annals, who personated one of the princes murdered by Richard III. in the Tower, and unsuccessfully endeavoured to support his

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claims by waging civil war. Though numbers were really deceived, his influential adherents were not. They merely supported his pretensions from feelings of hostility to the reigning monarch: and all doubt respecting his being an impostor has long since been set at rest, by the discovery of the bodies of the two unfortunate royal boys. But the most memorable instance of the kind occurred in Russia, at the commencement of the seventeenth century, when the line of Rurik had just expired, and the people were predisposed to welcome without rigid inquiry any intimation to the contrary. It was alike remarkable on account of the merits of the adventurer, the success he met with, his sudden fall, the mystery in which his real name and antecedents are involved, and the impossibility of determining the point, whether he was an impostor in the strict sense of the term, or merely imposed upon others, having been himself deceived.

Ivan the Terrible in murdering his eldest son destroyed the pillar and hope of his house. Though two sons survived him, Feodore, the elder, was feeble in body and imbecile in mind, while Demetrius, the younger, the issue of a seventh marriage, was a child little more than two years of age. These princes were the last representatives of the line of Rurik. Hence, in case of their death without issue, a new family must be called to the throne. Feodore, who succeeded, being unable to rule personally, willingly committed

the government to his brother-in-law Boris Godunoff, content to follow his favourite pursuit, that of haunting the churches and ringing the bells. Having no children, Demetrius was the presumptive heir. Circumstances were thus favourable to an able, bold, active, and unscrupulous man, conspiring to have the crown eventually placed upon his own head. Boris, the regent, had all these qualities; and as Feodore was not expected to live long, the boy-prince was the only obstacle in the way of his attempting to gain the throne. Chronicles relate that, in the dead of the night, the regent assembled several astrologers, and desired them to cast his horoscope. "The crown is thy destiny," was the auspicious announcement. The oracles then suddenly became mute, as if afraid to proceed. Being told to complete their augury, they stated that he would reign, but only for seven years. In a transport of joy, he exclaimed, "Though it be but for seven days, no matter, so I reign!"

By the orders of the regent, Demetrius was removed to Uglitch, a town which had been bestowed upon him by his father as an appanage. He was there placed under the care of his mother, the dowager-czaritza; and grew up to the age of ten, evincing a spirit kindred to that of his sire, wild and ferocious. Early in May 1591, in the afternoon, he was in the court-yard of the palace at play with four other boys. Three attendants were near, his governess, nurse, and a

servant-woman. According to the testimony of these persons, he had a knife in his hand. For a moment they all lost sight of him; and the next instant, he was found writhing on his back, with a large wound in his throat. The boy died without uttering a word. Whether he had been murdered, or had fallen in a fit upon the knife with which he was playing, was never ascertained. But the idea of murder occurred to almost every one's mind; and as some known tools of Boris were about, suspicion fell upon them. A riot ensued, in which the supposed authors of the deed were slain by the excited towns-people. The regent ordered an inquiry to be instituted, the result of which was a verdict that the boy died by a wound accidentally inflicted upon himself. Boris then retaliated upon the inhabitants of Uglitch for their violence. Numbers were put to death; others were thrown into dungeons; the rest were dispersed; the palace was rased to the ground; a flourishing town was made a desert; and the dowager-czaritza, one of the most malcontent, was banished to a convent. But it was known that the inquiry had been conducted in a most slovenly manner by interested parties. The body had not even been examined, nor the knife and the wound compared; and the barbarous treatment of the town was considered presumptive evidence of murder, as intended to obliterate every memorial of the deed. It is certain that Demetrius died; it is nearly so that he was murdered;

and it is very probable that Boris was the author of the crime.

Seven years afterwards, in 1598, the dynasty of Rurik became extinct in the person of Feodore; and by subtle machinations, long in action, Boris procured his own election to the throne. He reigned five years without his authority being disputed; and his administration was able and vigorous. With Elizabeth of England he cultivated a good understanding; wished to unite his son to one of her relatives; and his ambassador Mikulin fought for the queen in the streets of London when the mad conspiracy of Essex broke out. But the usurper had grave difficulties to contend with. A famine, one of the most horrible on record, raged for three years, with its usual concomitant pestilence. Cannibalism was a common occurrence. Parents fed upon their children; and passengers were entrapped into houses to be killed and eaten. Moscow became a city of the dead more than of the living; for as the people flocked in crowds to it from the country for provisions, they perished by thousands in the streets, the stores being all exhausted. 120,000 corpses lay for some days unburied; and half a million of persons died in the capital alone, owing to the influx of strangers. This calamity rendered the nation restive; and the rule of Boris was in itself exasperating to various classes.

The great nobles hated him, for to them he was

severe and tyrannical, deeming them his natural enemies. The peasants detested him, because, to conciliate the petty nobility, he deprived them of the privilege of changing their domicile, and irrevocably bound them down as slaves to the soil. He was not only the author of Russian serfdom in its worst form, but of a fugitive slave law, to which that in action in the United States is precisely parallel. The majority of the population were thus ready for a change, when a surprising rumour reached them from the Lithuanian frontier, and spread with astonishing rapidity throughout the empire, that the Demetrius, believed to have been murdered at Uglitch, was still alive, and in Poland. The reports circulated were contradictory in many of their details, but all agreed in the main statement, that the young prince lived, and was preparing to contend for the throne of his ancestors.

In the summer of the year 1603, Prince Adam Wiszniswiecki was residing on his estate at Brahin in Lithuania. Irritated by some act of negligence, he chastised his equery or valet, and applied to him an opprobrious epithet. "If you knew, prince," said the young man, betraying strong emotion, "who I am, you would not treat me so, or call me by that name." "Who are you, then?" inquired the master, "and whence do you come?" "I am the czarevitch Demetrius," was the reply, "the son of Ivan Vassilievitch." In answer to further questions he recounted the parti-

culars of a singular escape from the assassins of Boris. He stated that his physician, having become acquainted with the plan of the tyrant to destroy the heir-presumptive, and been solicited to become a party to it, had agreed to the proposal, intending all the while to frustrate the foul design. Substituting for him at the critical moment the child of a serf, who was murdered, this benevolent man had carried off the real prince, and placed him under the care of a devoted adherent of his family, persuaded that concealment was his only security. This was the substance of the story. Both the physician and the subsequent guardian were dead. But, in the absence of these two witnesses, the unknown produced a Russian seal, bearing the name and arms of the czarevitch, and a golden cross, adorned with jewels of considerable value. These, he said, were the baptismal gifts of his godfather, Prince Ivan Mstislavsky. This statement was made with the utmost self-possession, and without any braggart air. The Lithuanian noble at once gave credence to it when the engraved seal and the jewelled cross were exhibited; and raised the servant to the rank of an illustrious guest, placing his wealth and influence at his disposal.

Soon afterwards a Russian fugitive, who had been in attendance on the czarevitch, recognised the identity of the stranger with the prince. He appeared to be from twenty to twenty-two years old; and Demetrius, if he had lived, would have been twenty-two in 1603. He

had a wart on the forehead, another under the right eye, and one arm was longer than the other. By these marks the son of Ivan was distinguished. The deportment and acquirements of the adventurer sustained his pretensions. Perfectly at his ease in the company of palatines, dignity was blended with grace in his manners. He was comparatively well educated, wrote with a bold and rapid hand, knew a few words of Latin, spoke with facility both the Polish and the Russian languages, and was intimately acquainted with the genealogies of the Russian nobility. To these accomplishments he added admirable horsemanship, and skill in fencing.

All Poland espoused the cause of the pretender, and hailed him as the true Demetrius, the son of Ivan the Terrible, the rightful occupier of the Russian throne. The nobles invited him to sumptuous banquets, and placed themselves at his command. Among the most active of his friends was George Mniszek, Palatine of Sandomir, with whose beautiful daughter, Marina, he fell in love, and signed a contract of marriage. But his fortunes were most advanced for the time by a promise made to the papal nuncio to bring over Russia to the Church of Rome, on condition of being supported by the authority and influence of the Popedom. He formally abjured the religion of the Greek Church, but both the promise and the abjuration were, for obvious reasons, to be kept secret for the present; and out-

wardly he continued to conform to the ritual of the people he aspired to govern. This step induced Sigismond III., a bigoted papist, to sanction his pretensions. He was officially presented to him, addressed as Demetrius Ivanovitch, received a pension, and was allowed to enrol Polish volunteers in his service, the king being bound by a truce not to take up arms against Russia. Thus favoured, the pretender lost not a moment in preparing by force to assert his rights as the legitimate prince. While these events were passing in Poland, a fugitive monk was active among the Cossacks of the Don and the Dnieper, announcing the speedy arrival of the czarevitch, and exhorting them to fly to his banner.

The romantic story fell like an electric shock upon Russia, where sullen discontent with the existing ruler was universal, and exasperation general. Though it produced no popular disturbances, the feeling of surprise, anxiety, and hope created was intense in the extreme. Nature exhibited phenomena which the superstition of the times considered indicative of change. The northern lights were unusually brilliant, and a comet appeared. By a curious coincidence, a Swedish prince then living, Gustavus Ericsson, had narrowly escaped with life from an usurper, and been obliged to wander abroad for years in the greatest obscurity, adopting various disguises to elude the agents of the tyrant,—that of a Russian shepherd among

others. These well-known circumstances, so similar to the adventures related of himself by the assumed Demetrius, facilitated the reception of his tale. Even many of those who doubted, or firmly believed him an impostor, kept their misgivings to themselves. They were glad of hostility being offered from any quarter to the reign of Boris; and while compelled to appear in his service, it was with a coldness which propitiated defeat. The czar showed in the crisis none of the boldness or the craft for which he had formerly been distinguished. The burden of an ill-got crown had enfeebled his mind and impaired his health. Fearful of giving importance to his rival, he delayed making adequate preparations to resist him, and laid himself open to the charge of being afraid, conscious that his intended victim, the true son of Ivan, had reappeared to call him to account. One of his first steps was to send agents into Poland, offering large bribes to the nobles, either to kill their guest, or deliver him up into his hands. Such offers were not only indignantly rejected, but, as might have been foreseen, they confirmed the faith of the parties to whom they were addressed in the integrity of the self-styled prince. While the latter armed, Boris sought to identify him with the missionary monk among the Cossacks, a well-known vagabond, whom he denounced by proclamation as "a rascally disrobed monk, the apostate, rebel, and magician, who wished to introduce the Latin heresy

into Russia, and to build Catholic churches in the orthodox land."

It was in October 1604 that Demetrius crossed the frontier, and commenced the conquest of a vast empire. His force was small, though select; but it was largely increased as he penetrated the country, and marched to Novgorod. In the neighbourhood of that city, on the last day of the year, he fought his first battle, saying, as the action commenced, "Almighty God, if my cause is unjust, may thy wrath fall upon me alone! But thou knowest my right, and will make my arm invincible!" He gained the victory, but in the following month, January 1605, sustained a defeat. It did not in the least abate his confidence, or damp the ardour of his followers. Adherents, attracted by his name, found their way from distant parts of the empire to his standard; his manifestoes calling upon the people to acknowledge their legitimate sovereign were diligently circulated through the country; while the troops which had been collected against him were so successfully tampered with, that officers and men deserted daily, and the whole army was brought to the point of revolt. It was at this juncture, in April, that Boris, who never appeared in the field in person, was seized with a mortal malady at Moscow. After being consecrated a monk, according to custom, receiving the name of Bogolep, "Agreeable to God," he became insensible and expired. Stung by defections, mortified and enraged at finding

himself surrounded by laggards or traitors, and despairing for the future, the conflict of passion in his mind seems to have induced apoplexy, though some suppose that he intentionally destroyed himself by poison. The attempt was made by members of his family to secure the throne for his son Feodore, but he was deposed by the unanimous will of the people, and strangled by some boyars, anxious to display their zeal for Demetrius, who was now universally acknowledged as the new master. Condemned by this proceeding as an usurper, the body of Boris was removed from the sepulchre of the czars, in the church of the Archangel Michael, and unceremoniously interred without the walls of the capital.

Sure of his position, the successful aspirant was in no haste to approach Moscow, but as a point of dignity, and to excite expectation, he delayed his entrance to the 20th of June. There were also matters of extraordinary delicacy to be adjusted. How was he to bear the scrutiny of the dowager czaritza, mother of the real Demetrius, and his own putative mother? She was still alive, immured in her convent; and the people would of course expect her restoration to the honours due to her rank, as a point of filial duty. This was a difficulty which could not be evaded, but must be fairly met, grappled with, and overcome, or the imposition would at once be unmasked. On entering the capital, Demetrius was received with enthusiastic

acclamations as the representative of a long line of kings, miraculously preserved to restore and continue a race, which the people had thought extinct. But an incident occurred, as the procession crossed the great square of the Kremlin, which had a painful effect upon the superstitious multitude. The wind began to blow with the fury of a hurricane; it raised the dust in clouds; and the horsemen could with difficulty keep their seats. The spectacle was for a few minutes completely hid from the spectators. They crossed themselves, saying, "God keep us from harm." This was not the only event of the day that excited uneasy feelings. As the clergy began to chant *Te Deum,* the Polish guards struck up military music, and completely overpowered the ecclesiastical strain. The heretical foreigners were also allowed to enter the churches, a defilement to the temples of orthodoxy. But Demetrius acted his part so admirably in the church of the Archangel Michael, as to efface all painful impressions. Tears rolled down his cheeks, as, with clasped hands, he knelt before the tomb of Ivan. Kissing it, he exclaimed, "O father! thy orphan reigns; this he owes to thy holy prayers!" The audience was not to be restrained. The sobbing became general, and on all sides the cry arose, "He is the son of the Terrible!"

A more singular scene, unique in the annals of the world, was witnessed about a month afterwards. The

dowager czaritza set out from her convent to see and embrace the son she had so long mourned as barbarously murdered. Demetrius left Moscow to meet her in great state, followed by an immense multitude, whose curiosity was raised to the highest pitch. At a convenient spot a magnificent tent had been prepared, in which the first interview between the parties occurred. After remaining together a short time, they came out, threw themselves into one another's arms, in the sight of the people. There was a loud and universal shout of joy. Ivan's widow had recognised her son. The finishing blow was now given to incredulity. Demetrius conducted the princess to a carriage, and walked bareheaded by its side. In the capital, he treated her with profound respect, and paid her daily visits. She was provided with a separate establishment, a competent revenue; and had unquestionably been induced by the prospect of these advantages to lend herself to a cheat. It is a possible surmise, though improbable, that *he* might have been imposed upon by others, and have thought himself what he professed to be; but it is impossible that *she* could have been deceived. A few minutes after the murder of the boy at Uglitch, a fact as well authenticated as any in history, she was on the spot, saw the body, and must have known whether the corpse was that of her own child or not. Yet she now repudiated the evidence of her senses, maintained through fourteen

years, just at the moment when high station and vast influence accrued to her from the recantation. Shortly afterwards, the coronation took place; and Demetrius was formally recognised the Czar of Russia. The ceremony was not performed entirely to the satisfaction of the populace. A Jesuit delivered a congratulatory Latin oration. Not a word was therefore understood by the people. But as Latin was known to be the jargon of the western heretics, they concluded that the oration must be a violent tirade against their own religion.

The new monarch proved himself an able man, and in many respects a praiseworthy sovereign. He had quick perceptions, a retentive memory, active habits, and insisted upon being personally cognisant of all affairs of administration. He lightened taxation, modified the bondage of the serfs, punished official venality, and was anxious to have justice placed within the reach of the lowest subject. Twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday, he sat in the portico of his palace, for the humblest to approach him with their grievances. He was moreover remarkably clement. "No," he exclaimed, when urged to put a conspirator to death, "I have sworn not to shed Christian blood; and I will keep my oath. There are two ways of governing an empire; tyranny and generosity. I choose the latter. I will not be a tyrant." He endeavoured to civilise the people, patronised the arts, was

fond of music, had symphonies during his meals, and retained a band of foreign vocal and instrumental performers. Such a man was not qualified by his temper or tastes to reign long at Moscow. His humane disposition, noble as it was, was anti-Russian, and was not understood. The people had been so accustomed to be ruled by fear, and to see trains of hangmen and executioners at the heels of their czars, that they confounded his forbearance with cowardice, and soon began to look upon him with contempt.

He committed the common error of being over-confident, and hence imprudent. A stranger to the habits of his subjects, while of independent spirit, he was perpetually offending national predilections by violating time-honoured usages, till his sins of omission and commission in this respect made him positively odious. It was popularly considered essential to the dignity of the sovereign, that he should only appear abroad with a numerous retinue, and ride at a slow and measured pace. Former czars were even supported under the arms by courtiers on passing from one room to another. But Demetrius was often in the streets on foot, with only a single companion, and was as often seen galloping helter-skelter through them like a Cossack. Far superior to those around him, he freely pointed out to them their deficiencies; but what he considered demerits, they regarded as honourable badges of distinction from the heretical nations.

"Travel," he would say to the boyars, "and gain instruction, for you are no better than savages." While a marked preference for the Poles in his service exasperated the Russians, a careless or irreverent demeanor towards the Church and its ordinances exposed him to the charge of being secretly an alien in religion,—an unpardonable crime. Though he did not attempt to perform the promise made to the Papacy—a wholly impracticable object—it was observed that, in addressing the clergy, he often used the phrases, "*your* religion," "*your* ritual," plainly implying, that he belonged to a different profession. He frequently neglected to salute the images of the saints, dined without having the table sprinkled with holy water, rose up from meals without washing his hands, and was fond of veal, deemed an unclean meat. On one occasion, he was told that something proposed was prohibited by the seventh general council of the Church. "Well," said he, "what matter? very likely it is allowed by the eighth." The words, though uttered without any particular reference, were considered equivalent to a declaration in favour of the western heresy, as the seventh general council is the last acknowledged by the Eastern Church. While these incidents provoked anger, they were accepted as plain proofs that he had not the blood of the czars in his veins. It is probable that most of the nobles had never espoused his cause from any conviction of his

legitimacy. They merely wished to make use of him as an instrument to deliver them from a tyrant, expecting him to remain a pliant tool in their hands; and when disappointed in the latter object by his independent bearing, they became either anxious for his fall, or indifferent to his fate.

In his public policy Demetrius contemplated the grand design of forming a Panslavic league, with Russia for its head, and the overthrow of the Mohammedan dominion in Europe for its object. But his own profusion, and the preparations for this crusade, exhausted the treasury; and, in an evil hour for himself, a wistful eye was cast upon the revenues of the hordes of lazy monks in his dominions, with confiscation in view. From the moment that he thought of touching the coffers of the clergy, he became a second Julian the Apostate in their esteem, and his ruin was determined. The fall of this remarkable man was more rapid than his rise. In May 1606, after having been a twelvemonth on the throne, he carried into effect his contract of marriage with Marina, the daughter of the Polish palatine of Sandomir. The bride travelled in great state, occupying three months in the journey from Cracow to Moscow. She was attended by a numerous company of her countrymen, who, on reaching the capital, treated the inhabitants with insolent disdain, and incensed them to frenzy by irreverent behaviour to their images and relics. The time was

favourable for an insurrection. It was planned by Vassili Shuiski, a noble, who had previously conspired, and been forgiven. The marriage took place with great pomp and revelry on the 18th. Demetrius received many warnings of his danger; but, with remarkable infatuation, he disregarded them, and neglected the most obvious precautions. "I hold Moscow," said he, "and the empire in my hand." Still, he had his own painful presentiments; for, according to Gilbert, a Scotch officer of his lifeguards, he came hastily into his room one night, having been twice disturbed by apparitions, the phantasms of imagination. With the first dawn of day on the 29th the great bell was rung, to which the 3000 bells of the city responded. The people rose in arms, and the revolt began. Shuiski, with his partisans, appeared on horseback in the great square, and was joined by the populace armed with clubs and axes. They repaired in bands by previous concert to the houses occupied by the Poles, which had been marked with chalk in the night, and massacred the foreigners, while the main body moved towards the Kremlin. One of the gates being thrown open by a confederate among the guards, the mob rushed in, pausing for a moment before the church of the Assumption, to crave the blessing of our Lady of Vladimir. "Orthodox Christians," shouted Shuiski, holding the cross in one hand, and brandishing his sword with the other, "death to the heretic!'

The multitude eagerly repeated the cry, "Death to the heretic!"

The sound of the bells aroused Demetrius from slumber. He sent to inquire the cause of the alarm, and was answered by one in the secret, that a great fire had broke out in the city. But he was soon aware from the uproar of the approaching multitude that his throne and life were assailed. Hastily dressing, he despatched Basmanof to gain intelligence. This officer was one of the few Russians who enjoyed his confidence; and he remained faithful to the last. Scarcely had he returned to his master, before "Death to the heretic!" "Death to the impostor!" was heard in the interior of the palace, the conspirators having broken in. On reaching the apartment, one of them exclaimed: — "Well! unlucky emperor, at last thou art awake; come and give an account of thyself to the people of Moscow." Basmanof was appealing to them, when a ferocious ruffian stabbed him mortally, saying, "Go to hell, villain, with thy czar." From room to room the bloodhounds hunted their prey. A few Strelitz, his body-guard, delayed their progress by barricades against the doors; but they obtained only a brief reprieve for the unfortunate victim. Perceiving resistance useless, he made his way to a distant part of the palace, opened a window, and leaped out into the court below, a height of thirty feet. He broke his leg in the fall. It had already received a sabre wound;

and he fainted under the complicated agony. Some guards, brought to the spot by his groans, paid humane attentions to him; but the rebels were speedily upon him, and signalised their orthodoxy by prolonging and adding to the torture of the heretic. They dragged him into the palace with blows and curses; and dressed him out of mockery in a pastrycook's caftan. "Look at the Czar of all the Russias," shouted the tormentors, "he has now put on a dress that befits him." "Dog of a bastard," said one of the crew, "tell us who you are, and whence you came." Collecting all his remaining strength, and raising his voice, Demetrius replied, "You all know that I am your czar, the legitimate son of Ivan Vassilievitch. Ask my mother if it is not so; or, if you desire my death, at least give me time to confess myself." But no time was allowed. A bystander, pressing through the throng, cried out, "Why talk you so long with this dog of a heretic? this is how I'll shrive this Polish piper." A shot from his arquebuss ended the agony of the czar, and terminated his career.

Marina was more fortunate than her husband. She contrived to conceal herself till the storm abated; but the worst brutality was offered to the Polish ladies in attendance upon her. Even the sanguinary deed did not satisfy the vengeance of the populace. Every species of indignity was offered to the lifeless corpse. After lying exposed for some days, it was unceremo-

niously buried without the walls, then disinterred and burnt, as if some mysterious power of disturbance inhered in the remains, or to make doubly sure the extinction of a formidable personage. The ashes being collected and mixed with gunpowder, a cannon was charged with them, dragged to the gate by which he entered Moscow, and fired off in the direction of Poland. Such was the fate of the false Demetrius; for it is scarcely possible to entertain a doubt respecting the fallacy of his pretensions, however he might have been led to think them well-founded. In that terrible ceremony of the Russian Church, the cursing of the heretics, his name occurs in the list of the political heresiarchs upon whom the malediction "*anàfema, anàfema,*" is pronounced. But to this day, his origin and history, prior to his public appearance, are involved in mystery. His predecessor, Boris, though an usurper, is more lightly visited in the same ceremonial, having been favourable to the Church. "For the good he wrought may he enjoy the heavenly blessing; for the evil, *anàfema, anàfema.*"

The leader of the conspiracy, Shuiski, was raised by his partisans to the throne. But commotion became rampant in the country, and Russia entered upon an epoch in her history most calamitous, though happily brief. Sigismond, the Polish king, and his subjects were eager to revenge the slaughter of their countrymen. The provinces did not sympathise with the

capital in opinion concerning the late ruler, or in the election of a successor. Thousands regretted his fate and cherished his memory. Hence, to put an end to this feeling, so dangerous to himself, Shuiski obtained from the dowager-czaritza a written declaration that the slain czar was not her son. But she had acted in such a manner that her testimony was valueless. He then pretended to find the body of the boy Demetrius amid the ruins of Uglitch, and removed it to Moscow. But his opponents insisted that he produced a substituted corpse. The Church interfered in the controversy, and contrived a miracle for the occasion. Heaven, it was affirmed, proclaimed the identity of the body as that of the real prince, for it had been found wholly uncorrupt: the glow of life had not even faded from the cheek, and some nuts in the boy's hand were still quite fresh. Young Demetrius was of course canonised; and the mummy of a boy representing him, in the church of the Archangel, is now one of the most venerated objects in Moscow, exposed on festivals in an open coffin, magnificently attired, to admiring crowds.

It required time for the miracle to gain circulation and authority; and while the partisans of the late czar were unappeased, the rumour was started, spreading like wildfire, that the conspirators had actually hunted, mocked, murdered, buried, burnt, and fired off at the cannon's mouth, the *wrong man!* Horses were missing in the royal stables on the day of the outbreak, on one

of which, it was surmised, that the intended victim had escaped. Three unknown persons in Russian costume, but speaking Polish, had crossed the Oka in a boat, one of whom, it was said, while paying the ferryman, observed, "You have ferried the czar; when he comes back to Moscow with a Polish army, he will not forget this service." The public distraction was now at its height. An insurrection, supported by the Poles, broke out, and a furious civil war ensued. Still the supposed illustrious fugitive did not make his appearance. This was doubtless because the parties to the imposition had not found a suitable agent to personate him. They at last pitched upon a Lithuanian Jew, a coarse-looking vulgar man, only qualified by impudence for the part he had to act. Gilbert, the Scotch captain before mentioned, who had entered the Polish service, was not for a moment deceived, and openly avowed his convictions to his general. "It is no matter, captain," said the latter, "this Demetrius shall serve our turn to be revenged of the —— Russe." Political reasons induced the king, Sigismond, to recognise the second pretender, and he took the field professedly on his behalf, but really for himself. The strangest scene in this strange drama transpired when Marina, the czarina of a fortnight, came to the camp. The lady had no wish to return to the obscurity from which she had emerged, and encounter the ridicule of having united her fortunes to those of an impostor, who had been deposed and

murdered; rather than do this, she reconciled herself to countenance a stupid fraud in the hope of remounting a throne. Though not a little startled at first by the uncouth visage of the adventurer, she overcame the shock, embraced him as her own Demetrius, lost but found, and edified the spectators by a mock display of conjugal tenderness. She lived with him as her husband, and had a child, named Ivan, by him. Her father, the palatine of Sandomir, sanctioned by his presence the disgrace of his daughter.

Almost all Russia declared for the revived Demetrius. Shuiski was deposed, and ended his days in a Polish prison. But the fate of the impostor was soon decided. Being deserted by his foreign confederates, after having served their purpose, he resigned the thought of empire to lead a bandit life, at the head of a gang of Cossacks and Tatars, by one of whom he was assassinated, as an act of private revenge. Sigismond was now master of the situation. He obtained possession of Moscow, with the principal cities, and Russia offered the crown to his son Vladislaus. But selfishly wishing to wear it himself, in subordination to his own, thus denationalising the country, he reunited the people by rousing their patriotism, and lost all the advantages that had been gained. Minim, an obscure butcher of Nijni Novgorod, exhorted his fellow citizens to rise, placed himself at their head, and drove out the foreigners. Town after town followed the example,

and sent contingents into the field to form an army for a war of liberation. Prince Pojarsky, by means of this force, delivered the capital from the enemy, and brought six years of dreadful anarchy to a close. Far from being willing now to accept a Polish prince, the proposal was indignantly scouted. Determined to place a native family upon the throne, deputies assembled at Moscow, in the Lent of the year 1613, to make the election. The choice fell upon Michael Romanoff, who became the founder of the present dynasty. While these events were proceeding, Marina and her son were in the country of the Don Cossacks, under the guardianship of Zarucki, a former hetman, with a few adherents. They were finally surprised, captured, and conveyed to Moscow. Zarucki was impaled, Marina died in prison, and Ivan, though only three years old, was publicly hanged — an execrable murder. A fine monument, erected in 1818, in the neighbourhood of the Kremlin, commemorates the deliverance of Russia. It represents the butcher of Novgorod in the act of calling his countrymen to arms, and Pojarsky listening to the appeal.

CHAP. VI.

ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS.—RUSSIAN DISSENTERS.

THE ROMANOFF FAMILY.—REIGN OF MICHAEL.—GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.—THE RUSSIAN PATRIARCHATE.—AMBITION OF NICON.—PALM SUNDAY.—REVISION OF THE CHURCH BOOKS.—EARLY ECCLESIASTICAL DISSENSIONS.—REMARKABLE JEWISH HERESY.—GREAT SCHISM OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.—THE RUSSIAN DISSENTERS.—VIETKA.—THE ANTI-CLERICALS.—THE POMORIANS.—VOLUNTARY MARTYRS.—SELF-BAPTISTS.—CHINKMEN.—CHAMPIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

THE English at Moscow, in the early days of the factory, had for their next door neighbour, Nikita Romanoff, the head of a noble family of Prussian origin, connected by marriage with the race of Rurik. Its members were often objects of suspicion to the czars on account of this affinity. In one of his fits of passion, Ivan the Terrible suddenly ordered the individual named to be deprived of all his goods and chattels. This was done so completely that he had to send hastily to the foreign factors for cotton stuffs, in order to have necessary articles of clothing for himself and his children. For Theodore, one of the latter, Horsey, the resident trade agent, composed a Latin grammar in the Russian character, which, however

imperfect, was studied with great delight. Upon this youth becoming the head of his house, he was singled out by the usurper Boris for destruction, as obnoxious to his jealousy. To escape the axe of the executioner, he entered the ranks of the priesthood, under the name of Philaretes, and rose to the dignity of metropolitan of Rostof. In the troubles of his country, the ecclesiastic nobly distinguished himself on the patriotic side; and being sent upon a mission into Poland, he was detained a prisoner at Warsaw, and subsequently removed to the castle of Marienburg. During his confinement, he found means to communicate with his countrymen; urged them to unite in placing a native upon the throne; and while still languishing in foreign bondage, Philaretes heard that his own son Michael had been raised to the high position. The merits, services, and sufferings of the father contributed in no slight degree to the royal honours of the son.

Michael Romanoff, whose father and grandsire had worn English cottons, lost no time in despatching envoys to the courts of Europe to announce his elevation. They landed at Gravesend in 1614, with the double object in view of negotiating a loan, and securing the mediation of James I. in making peace with Sweden. The king sent out Sir James Merrick for this purpose. He reached Russia in the following year, and received at Moscow a remarkable letter from the Swedish monarch, Gustavus Adolphus, who was

then conducting a successful campaign on the frontier. "Upon condition," said he, "the Muscovites be duly and justly restrained for time to come, I lay my glory a sacrifice at the feet of England, with a view to convince mankind in general that I waged this war, not from motives of ambition,—for my territories are sufficiently large and powerful,—but from actual compulsion and the necessity of things." The peace of Stolbova in 1617, guaranteed to Sweden the payment of a just debt, with the formal cession of Livonia, Esthonia, and the country from Narva to the Ladoga, thus including the ground on which St. Petersburg now stands. A truce for fourteen years was concluded with Poland in 1618, upon which Philaretes, the father of the czar, obtained his liberty; and the patriarchal chair being then vacant, he was raised to it upon his return to Moscow.

For seven centuries after the foundation of the Russian church, it was governed by metropolitans, who derived their spiritual authority from the patriarch of Constantinople. There were forty-six of these dignitaries at Kiev, Vladimir, and Moscow. They travelled to the imperial city for consecration, except during the period of its occupation by the Latins, when the Greek patriarchs resided at Nicea. Upon the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, the inconvenience of having their metropolitans subordinate to spiritual chiefs, who were the vassals of the sultans,

was instantly felt by the czars. But more than a century elapsed before the Russian Church became independent; and when the final separation was effected, it was done by an irregular stretch of ecclesiastical authority. In 1588, Jeremiah, the patriarch of Constantinople, while journeying in Russia to collect alms, constituted Job patriarch of Moscow. In this act he exceeded his powers; but it was subsequently legitimated by a general council of the Oriental church. Philaretes was the fourth patriarch.

Thus, in the space of a few years, the Romanoff family was aggrandised by one of its members becoming the high-priest of the nation, while another was the supreme temporal ruler. This connection with the crown gave immense influence in the state to the mitre. In fact, Michael and Philaretes, son and sire, were for a time co-czars, the former simply taking the precedence. Ukases were headed, "Michael Feodorovitch, sovereign, czar, and grand-prince of all the Russias, and his father Philaretes, mighty lord and most holy patriarch of all the Russias." The latter was present at the reception of foreign ambassadors, took part in all political affairs, and sat at the council-board, or at the festive table, on the right hand of the sovereign. The power, splendour, and wealth of the Russian patriarchate date from this epoch. The dignitary was absolute judge in all spiritual affairs; and could inflict the punishment of the rack or the wheel, and condemn

capitally those who violated the laws of the church. There was no appeal against his sentence; and those who preferred submitting themselves to his tribunal could not be cited to that of the czar. Nicon, a man of boundless ambition, who held the office in the next reign, openly endeavoured to raise his chair above the throne. He not only claimed the right of sitting in the senate by the side of the monarch, but aspired to determine by his veto questions of war and peace. The senators who disputed his pretensions were visited with the ban of excommunication, till the Czar Alexis summoned a synod of bishops, and procured the deposition of the arrogant priest.

Annually, on Palm Sunday, the patriarchs appeared in all the pride and pomp of their office. There was a stately procession formed from the Kremlin to one of the churches, intended to represent the triumphant entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. The ecclesiastical chief rode on horseback, holding a cross of gold in his right hand, embellished with a profusion of diamonds, and wearing the great mitre richly set with jewels. The people strewed the way with their upper garments, or with pieces of scarlet cloth purchased for the occasion, while the poorer classes laid twigs and branches of birch upon the road. Bishops habited in white walked on each side of their superior; clergy carried pictures of saints and church ornaments before and behind; the czar, wearing the diadem, led on foot the

horse of his subject by the bridle; while the crowd shouted, as the procession passed along, "Hosannah to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosannah in the highest!" This display of sacerdotal superiority continued to the time of Peter, who had no liking for the post of footman, or to be second to any one on any occasion in his dominions. He abolished the supreme ecclesiastical dignity, constituted himself and his successors heads of the church, and vested its superintendence in a governing synod, the members of which are appointed by the crown. The patriarchate lasted from the consecration of Job in 1588 to the death of Adrian in 1702.

For upwards of half a century before and after the institution of the office, the Russian church was disturbed at intervals by proposals to revise the Sclavonic Scriptures and liturgical books, which had become exceedingly corrupt, owing to the errors accumulated by a long succession of uneducated and careless transcribers. The high clergy generally advocated the useful project; but it was stoutly opposed by the inferior grades, a class remarkable for ignorance, indolence, and licentiousness. Barlaam, the metropolitan of Moscow in 1520, employed a monk from Mount Athos, conversant with the Greek and Sclavonian languages, to restore the purity of the text; but the corrector was accused of being heretical by the enemies of the scheme, and the work was suspended by

clamour. In 1551, while a council declared in favour of revision, its members made themselves ridiculous by neglecting the task, to fulminate articles against the heinous sins of shaving the beard, driving with one pole, and eating sausages. The canon against shaving is singularly expressed, as the final clause seems to assign a divine dignity to the beard. "Of all the heresies that are punished by excommunication, none is more damnable and criminal than to shave the beard. Even the blood of the martyrs is unable to redeem such a guilt; consequently, whoever shaves his beard for human considerations, violates the law, and is an enemy to God, who has created us after his own image." Philaretes, during the reign of his son Michael, took part in abortive attempts to reform the church books; and under Alexis, the second of the Romanoffs, in 1654, a council of thirty-six bishops assembled at Moscow, over which the patriarch Nicon presided, and earnestly recommended the long-contemplated project to the attention of the czar. Macarius, the patriarch of Antioch, with his archdeacon, Paul of Aleppo, and the head of the Servian church, were present upon this occasion. At length, under the auspices of another council in 1667, attended by the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, with delegates from Jerusalem and Constantinople, the expurgation of the sacred books of the Sclavonic church was effected; and the revised texts were formally declared to be the only

true, lawful, and authorised copies. Alexis in person presided over this conclave. By its voice the ambitious and turbulent Nicon was deposed from the Russian patriarchate and the canon against shaving was repealed.

The effect of the above salutary measure in the Russian church, and that of the nearly contemporaneous Act of Uniformity in the English, was in some degree similar. Dissent arose upon an extensive scale, and persecution was vigorously applied to reclaim or crush the nonconformists.

Internal dissensions troubled the Russo-Greek communion at an early period, leading to separation from its pale. The more ancient controversies referred to trifling or ridiculous points of difference, yet were none the less furious on account of the causes being trivial. There was warm contention whether the hallelujah should be repeated two or three times at the end of the psalms, and whether the sign of the cross should be made with three fingers, symbolising the Trinity, according to the Greek ritual, or with two fingers, in allusion to the two natures in the person of Christ, as prescribed in the Armenian service. But in 1375, Karp Strigolnik, a citizen of Novgorod, touched upon topics of greater moment. Accusing the clergy of simony and abuse of the rite of confession, he raised a violent outcry against them, and proclaimed doctrines in which the fanatical blended with the sober. Upon

his tenets finding favour with the people, the ecclesiastics, alarmed for their revenues, vehemently denounced them, and caused their author, with some of his followers, to be drowned in the Volkhof. But a considerable sect was founded, and flourished in spite of dreadful severities. The Strigolniki still exist, and are distinguished by a particular kind of tonsure.

About a century afterwards, in the reign of Ivan III., a heresy arose remarkable alike for its character, the high clerical and civil rank of some of its adherents, and the secresy with which they professed and disseminated their opinions. Embracing the Hebrew notion that the Messiah was yet to come, they virtually repudiated Christianity, yet continued from prudential motives to conform outwardly to its rites. In private assemblies it was freely treated as an imposture. Christ and the Virgin were assailed with the most opprobrious epithets, the images of the saints were dishonoured, the belief in paradise and the resurrection was renounced, and astrological with other occult arts were practised. These strange views were adopted by a considerable number of priests and deacons. Kuritzin, the secretary of state, a well-known political functionary, was a zealous disciple. Even Zosimus, the metropolitan of Moscow, became a convert; and thus the orthodox church had an infidel for its primate. The existence of this sect was discovered in 1490, about twenty years after its rise; but nothing was then known respecting

the complicity of the secretary or the metropolitan; and the latter had to sit in judgment upon men, as heretics, whose opinions were secretly entertained by himself. Chiefly perhaps through his influence, the convicted were only punished with exile and excommunication. Upon further disclosures being made, Zosimus resigned his dignity and entered a convent, being probably permitted or commanded to take this step in order to avoid the scandal of proceedings against the head of the church. Kuritzin the secretary, with Cassian an archimandrite, and two other prominent persons, were burnt at the stake, while many obscure parties had their tongues cut out, and were exiled or imprisoned. A few descendants of these sectaries remain, who observe a Saturday sabbath, submit to circumcision, and are entirely Judaical in their religion, while Russian in every thing else.

But almost all the existing forms of dissent from the dominant church of the empire, date from the revision of the Scriptures and the liturgical books in the reign of Alexis, and were originated by that event. The superior clergy approved of the expurgation, with scarcely an exception besides Paul, Bishop of Kolomna, who resolutely refused to supersede the corrupt with the revised text in his diocese. Being deprived of his dignity and immured in a distant convent for this contumacy, he died in imprisonment, and thereby won the crown of martyrdom in the opinion of those who sym-

pathised with him. A considerable body of the lower clergy, and multitudes of laymen, ignorant, bigoted, and superstitious, pronounced in favour of the old books, and declaimed against the revised edition as a grievous heretical innovation. They consequently refused to admit the heterodox volumes into the churches, defied the authority of the czar, and the sword being drawn to compel obedience, civil war ensued. The nonconformists were numerous in the northern provinces, and had a formidable stronghold in the fortified convent of Solovetz, an island in the White Sea, which declared for the unrevised text. They held it for seven years; and when the monastery was taken by storm in 1675, many of the besieged, preferring death to surrender, fired the building, and voluntarily perished in the flames. In other places the same fanatical desperation was exhibited; for death in the cause of the ancient formularies was deemed a sure pledge of eternal life. While numbers chose the alternative of wilfully destroying themselves in the conflagration of their churches and houses, rather than submit to heretical defilement, others fled the country, or sought security in the Ukraine and along the Polish frontier, where the power of the Russian government was not firmly established.

It is not surprising that a wholly uninstructed people, driven from their homes, and harassed by the temporal power, for what they considered the cause of

orthodoxy, should be excited to wild and fantastic views, or be induced to adopt them by designing leaders. Hence the seceders from the establishment, while known by the name of Raskolniks, implying their common separation from its pale, speedily embraced discordant sentiments, divided and subdivided into innumerable sects, and assumed, or had applied to them, distinctive denominations, few of which have any euphony to the English ear. These sectaries are now found in almost every part of European and Asiatic Russia, having scattered of their own accord to escape oppression, or been forcibly exiled by the government. They are to be met with in both the capitals, in the Baltic provinces, and on the shores of the White Sea, while specially numerous in the country of the Dón Cossacks and throughout Siberia. They have been prominent, as might be imagined, in most of the insurrections that have troubled the empire.

The Russian dissenters agree generally in rejecting the revised sacred books, and using only such as are copied or reprinted from the unrevised text. They also consider Michael Romanoff the last orthodox monarch of the country, as his son and successor, Alexis, promoted and enforced a heretical innovation, which his successors have continued. The points of difference among them are endless. But the two grand divisions of the *Popovskie*, or those that have a priest-

hood, and the *Bezpopovskie*, or those that are priestless, will comprehend the whole body of the Raskolniks.

The first division, the *Popovskie*, or those who have priests, differ in various ritual usages from the establishment, in addition to the prime distinction which gave rise to their dissent. They make the sign of the cross, pronounce the name of Jesus, chant the hallelujah, and conduct their processions in the churches differently; consider shaving a deadly sin; and refuse to eat certain kinds of food allowed by the established ritual, as the hare and the potato. But while regarding the dominant church as heretical, they maintain the validity of its ministerial orders, because of their unbroken descent from the times of orthodoxy. In precisely the same manner, the Church of England, while seceding from the Church of Rome on the ground of error, regards the ordination of the Romanist priests as valid, because of the apostolical succession. The seceders of this class included from the first a considerable number of industrious, respectable, and even wealthy individuals. About the year 1690, in order to obtain the free enjoyment of their opinions, several of them emigrated from the northern provinces, and settled within the Polish frontier, on an island of the river Sosha, an affluent of the Dnieper. Others following their steps, the flourishing community of Vietka arose, with churches, monasteries, nunneries, and a population of 40,000 inhabitants. But this prosperity

was viewed with jealousy by the Russian government, as the voluntary expatriation of so many industrious subjects was a loss to the state. Various inducements were held out to the exiles to return. Such offers being rejected, the cabinet of the Empress Anne, in 1735, determined to recover the runaways by an infamous violation of territory, trusting for impunity to the weakness of Poland. Five regiments of infantry, one of dragoons, and two of Cossacks, secretly marched across the frontier, and surrounded the settlement. The houses and churches were given to the flames; the priests were sent off prisoners to different convents; and the people were transported to stock the desolate soil of Siberia. Still, as the spot had become a sacred one in the esteem of the community, other members of the body repaired to it; and Vietka rose from its ruins. But scarcely had the site resumed its former aspect, when there was another barbarian inroad under Catherine, followed by the abduction of 20,000 inhabitants, who were exiled for a similar reason to the same quarter. These outrages explain the present predominance of the Raskolniks in the stated Christian population of Siberia.

The second division, the *Bezpopovskie*, or those that are priestless, believe generally that the true apostolical succession having been interrupted by the heresy of the Patriarch Nicon and the Czar Alexis, no legitimate hierarchy can at present be constituted;

but they await the reappearance of our Lord to reorganise the church upon a regular and holy foundation. "The world," they say, "has had four eras,—a spring, or morning, from Adam to the building of Solomon's temple; a summer, or noon, which lasted till the birth of Christ; an autumn, or evening, till the appearance of Antichrist, who came 200 years ago; and now we are in the cold winter, the dark night, which will continue till the Lord shall descend upon the earth to save men, and open their eyes to the true light." They regard baptism administered according to the rites of the establishment as a profanation; and dissolve marriages at will, upon the principle, that as there are no longer any true priests to confer the nuptial benediction, no valid marriage can be contracted. So much do they abominate the national prelates and priests, that when any of them enter their houses, they hasten, as soon as they leave, to wash the seats and the walls.

This division of the seceders speedily subdivided into very numerous varieties, remarkable in many instances for the wild fanaticism of their views, and their barbarous habits, for which we must look to savage nations to find a parallel. Ignorant interpretations and absurd applications of texts of Scripture originated their distinctive peculiarities. In the more northerly districts they obtained the name of Pomorians, or "inhabitants of the sea-coasts," from their

vicinity to the shores of the White Sea. These people never use the word emperor, as it is not Russian; neither will they swear fidelity, but substitute for an oath the words, "Yes, yes, in truth;" and paved roads are avoided, because they have been made by the enemy of Christ. They meet in churches for prayer, and listen to addresses; but the exhorter is merely a private person, inspirited by the occasion, whose ordinary calling may be that of a hewer of wood and drawer of water. They also confess one to another, and administer the eucharist to themselves. It is said that when the convent of Solovetz was taken by the troops of the heretical Alexis, some consecrated loaves were carried off by the inmates who effected their escape. By working up fragments of these loaves with fresh paste, and repeating the process with crumbs of the manufactured article, their descendants believe themselves in possession of sacred bread fit for eucharistic use, and hand it down in like manner to their successors.

It is very probable that the separatists from the Russian church have been wilfully maligned by its members, while their own reserve respecting their religious opinions and usages has afforded a pretext for unfounded suspicions. Still, it is unquestionable that the distinctive tenets of some of the sectarian bodies involve horrible or licentious extravagances. The "Voluntary Martyrs," *Morelstschiki*, wresting from its

legitimate meaning the text — "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall save it,"—advocated and practised suicide at the beginning of the last century, deeming it meritorious to sacrifice themselves. Preference was generally given to death by combustion, called the baptism of fire. Only a few years ago, there were inhabitants living at Miask, and some may still survive, who witnessed the death of one of these fanatics on a pile which he had raised, and fired with his own hand. The dogmas of this sect are very imperfectly known, as they use no printed books, and never confide their mysteries to strangers. They keep Easter as a religious holiday, observe no sabbath, but hold meetings on Saturday night, singing hymns, of which the following lines are a specimen: —

"Be firm, mariners!
Triumph over the tempest!
Fear neither fire nor the whirlwind.
Christ is with us;
He will collect the faithful in His vessel;
His masts will not break;
His sails will never be rent;
He will hold the helm firmly, and land us in a safe haven.
The Holy Spirit is with us;
The Holy Spirit is in us."

Though the self-destructionists may now be considered practically extinct, there are "Mutilants," *Scoptzi*, and "Flagellants," *Chlisti*, who maim themselves,

scourge each other, and undergo severe penance, to mortify their members, and crucify the flesh. A few small communions, there is reason to believe, rush to the opposite extreme of licentious indulgence, grafting upon the command to love one another an unrestrained intercourse between the sexes.

The anti-clerical sects include "Self-Baptists," *Samokreshchennikee,* who administer the rite to themselves, and are fastidious respecting the water proper to be used. Some immerse in a river; but others collect the rain as it descends from heaven, deeming the streams polluted, as they are formed by drainage from the lands which Antichrist has defiled. Even rain-water is not sufficiently pure, in the view of the more rigid, unless it falls at a distance from heretical habitations. Some of these enthusiasts have been known to retire into the depth of forests, build huts, and construct cisterns, in which to perform the ceremony when filled by the showers. The "Chink-men," *Shehelnikee,* among the Cossacks of the Don, offer the most curious example of eccentric sectarianism. They obtain their name from the strictly-observed practice of looking at a chink, through which a ray of light is passing, when repeating their prayers. No explanation has been given of this circumstance. The most reputable body as to moral conduct are the "Champions of the Holy Ghost," *Dukhobortsi,* who recognise only the authority of the Gospels, rejecting

the other portions of Scripture, and never use any form of devotion but the Lord's Prayer. They have no churches, deeming them not only useless, but at variance with just conceptions of the Deity, who is everywhere present. They refuse to take an oath, and will not bear arms, deeming it sinful to shed human blood. These principles, obnoxious to a military power, and accounted incompatible with the duties of subjects, exposed the members of this sect, otherwise irreproachable, to dreadful persecutions in the last century, till, finding it impossible to overcome their firmness, the government removed them from their homes in southern Russia to the heart of Siberia.

CHAP. VII.

THE SUBURB OF HELL.

RUSSIA AND POLAND. — COSSACKS OF THE UKRAINE — THEIR SUBMISSION TO MUSCOVY. — TYRANNY OF DOLGOROUKI. — REVOLT OF STENKO RAZIN — HIS CAREER ON THE CASPIAN. — SECOND REVOLT OF STENKO — HIS CAPTURE OF ASTRACHAN. — ATTEMPTED REVOLUTION. — ADVANCE TOWARDS MOSCOW.—DEFEAT OF THE REBELS.—HORRIBLE EXECUTIONS.

THERE is a site under the authority of the "orthodox emperor," and within the European bounds of "Holy Russia," bearing the above denomination, which has been attached to it for nearly two centuries. The locality will be defined in detailing a revolt of the Cossacks, soon after they became Russian subjects, with the sanguinary punishments consequent on its suppression, which originated the title. The event illustrates the character of the insurrections that have troubled the empire. They have generally been provoked by some glaring injustice or crime on the part of the local authorities; have frequently placed the throne in jeopardy; been always marked with merciless ferocity on both sides; and executions upon an extensive scale have invariably signalised the triumph of the government, horrible in themselves,

but often rendered doubly so, by being disgustingly associated with the forms and ceremonies of religion.

We have seen Russia brought into temporary subordination to Poland by the anarchy consequent upon the failure of the line of Rurik. Had a vigorous and prudent man held the Polish sceptre at the crisis, the future relation of the two countries might have been different or reversed. Fortunately for Russia, the policy of Michael Romanoff, during a reign of thirty-two years, was calculated to recover the state from depression by its moderation and wisdom. Applying himself chiefly to rectify social disorders, restore public security, reconstruct the disorganised machine of government, and improve the army by foreign enlistment, he committed the country to his son and successor Alexis, in a condition to develop strength, cope with neighbouring powers, recover wrested territories, and make head specially against Poland. Both of the early Romanoffs, at the time of their accession, were required to subscribe a declaration, which curtailed the power of the crown. It bound the sovereign to make no new laws, or alter the old, unless circumstances imperatively required it; not to decide important causes by himself, but submit them to prescribed forms of trial; and not at his own pleasure either to declare war or make peace. This limitation, however futile it became in effect, deserves notice, as a proof, that bitter experience of unbridled despotism had in some measure

rectified the national understanding as to its divine right, and wrought a conviction of its intrinsic demerit.

Kiev, the early seat of the grand-princedom, had been lost to Russia since the era of the Mongol-Tatar invasion. It subsequently came under the dominion of the Poles; and the Cossacks of the Ukraine, the "march," "border," or "frontier" land, a pastoral and agricultural people, with the Zaporogues, who formed a kind of military aristocracy among them, occupying islands of the Dnieper, owned the sovereigns of Warsaw for their liege-lords, while enjoying *de facto* a large measure of independence. Goaded by oppression, this wild race revolted, and commenced a furious struggle to become a free and separate nation. But being deserted by their allies, the Tatars of the Crimea, they were eventually worsted, upon which their chief, Khmielnitski, on the 6th of January 1654, concluded a convention with Alexis, by the terms of which a portion of the Ukraine, with its Cossack population, submitted under certain conditions to the dominion of Muscovy. The czar did not accept of his new subjects without much hesitation, as it necessarily involved a war with Poland. Nor was he encouraged to the measure by a device of superstition. In order to confirm his wavering decision, two wild bulls were brought before him, and let loose upon each other, one of which personified Poland and the other Russia.

But in the ensuing contest, the Polish bull overcame his Russian antagonist. The event made such an impression upon the mind of Alexis that he shrank from the national encounter, till the voice of the patriarch lulled his fears, declaring that the interests of the Greek Church demanded hostilities with the Romanist Poles. Thus inspirited, he declared war, and waged it with such success that Kiev, Tchernigof, Smolensko, and other towns, were formally restored to Russia, while the sovereignty of the czar was confirmed over part of the Ukraine. It is said, that Khmielnitski bitterly regretted the step he had taken; and uttered upon his death-bed the memorable words, "I have committed towards God a grievous sin in having betrayed the Cossack people to the Czar Alexis. It were better they should confide in the Turks, or even in the Tatars themselves, than in the good faith of Russia. Return back then, Cossacks, to Poland; and continue for ever united to her."

The inhabitants of the Russian Ukraine, though co-religionists with the czar, soon found his representatives to be intolerably hard masters; and made a desperate effort to emancipate themselves from the yoke. At the close of a campaign in 1665, a regiment of Cossack soldiers disbanded, and prepared to return to their homes, in accordance with one of the conditions upon which they had consented to acknowledge the sovereignty of Russia. But Prince Dolgorouki, the

commander in the district, insisted upon retaining them in active service beyond the stipulated period. Disregarding their fiery spirit, and jealous love of liberty, he ordered some of the more refractory to be put to death; and had their colonel, Razin, hanged under his own eyes in the camp. This violation of the privileges of the troops, and passionate display of authority, occasioned a rebellion, in which torrents of blood were shed, dreadful enormities committed, and half the empire was surrendered to anarchy and rapine. The lives of 300,000 human beings would have been spared, and the throne of Alexis have escaped the peril of an overthrow, had his lieutenant in the Ukraine been a man of ordinary discretion and integrity.

The arbitrary conduct of the general was furiously resented by Stenko Razin, a soldier in the ranks, but a brother of the executed colonel. He was distinguished among his comrades by great bodily strength, daring character, and skill in military affairs; and from the knowledge of navigation afterwards displayed, it may be inferred, that he had been trained among the Zaporogues of the Dnieper. But being of reckless, predatory, and blood-thirsty disposition, he was far more qualified to lead a horde of brigands, than head a national insurrection. Exasperated by the death of his brother, he bound himself by oath to revenge the injury, and swore to extend his vengeance to all that bore the name of Russian. Restraining himself for a

time, he secretly fanned the flame of resentment in the minds of his countrymen, till, having gained the confidence of a sufficient number of adherents to justify undisguised action, he marched to the Don, and proclaimed the deliverance of the whole nation of the Cossacks from the Muscovite yoke. The rebel had over-estimated his own power, and underrated the means of his adversaries. Being pursued by superior forces, he left the Don for the Volga, and pushed forward to the Ural river, gathering discontented spirits to his standard, with the banditti and predatory hordes of the steppes, notoriously fond of adventure, and eager for pillage. Fixing his head-quarters on the northern shores of the Caspian, and equipping a flotilla, he swept the sea of all merchant vessels, ravaged its coasts, and attacked the Persian provinces. Stenko Razin was joined in these expeditions by Krivoy, alias Devil's-feast, with a bandit gang. The corsairs retired to the town of Gourief, at the mouth of the Ural, as occasion required, where forests of reeds and osiers formed a kind of natural asylum for their light barks, and where stores of provisions and ammunition were collected for future piracies.

Alexis, contemplating trade with Persia through the Caspian, had procured shipwrights from Holland and England, to build vessels, with a captain and a number of seamen to navigate them. A small frigate, called the Eagle, built upon the Volga, was the first ship

constructed on scientific principles in the empire. It descended the river to Astrachan, and entered the Caspian, in company with another vessel. But both were seized by the followers of Stenko Razin, who murdered the captain, but permitted the crews to escape to the shore. They found their way through Persia to some of the settlements of the East India Company, with the exception of a Dutch naval carpenter of the name of Brandt, who returned to Moscow, and lived to build vessels for the youthful Peter.

After various ineffectual attempts to dislodge and crush the rebels, Prince Prozorowski, the governor of Astrachan, was ordered to hunt them down without mercy or intermission; and he proceeded to execute his mission with a competent force by sea and land. In their retreat at the mouth of the Ural, the marauders were so completely and strongly environed, with nearly exhausted stores, that Stenko Razin confidentially attempted to make terms for himself, offering to surrender, and consecrate his influence with the Cossacks to the service of the czar, if assured of pardon for past acts of rebellion. Prozorowski, unhappily for himself, deemed it more prudent to listen to the proposal than run the hazard of battle with an enemy driven to desperation. He promised an amnesty. Alexis confirmed the compact, and kept his word, appointing the brigand chief, after he had taken the oath of allegiance, to the command of a troop on the

Don. But the thirst for vengeance had not been quenched in his mind; and having rioted in plunder, become somewhat familiar with power, while perfectly reckless of perfidy, he longed to regain his former position, and throw off the livery of a Muscovite subject. Intriguing among his countrymen, naturally restive, and moreover excited with just grounds of complaint against the government, he again raised the standard of independence; and the cry spread along the banks of the Don, the Volga, and the Ural, "Long live Stenko! down with the Russians!"

The adventurous ruffian, at the head of his beguiled followers, who vastly outnumbered the neighbouring military detachments of the czar, easily triumphed over them; and was immensely assisted in his early efforts by defections from the troops of the empire. Making his appearance before Astrachan, he summoned the governor to throw open the gates, in order to avoid the pillage of the town, and the massacre of the inhabitants. This was a display of mock humanity, for Stenko had sufficiently declared his purpose to wage a war of extermination with the Russians. His messenger was hanged from the battlements on the rampart by Prozorowski, as a reply to the summons. But the governor had not the power to withstand the fury of the assault he thus provoked and defied. His force was small; some of his soldiers revolted; and the majority of the inhabitants, being Tatars, were either

favourable to the enemy, or indisposed to join in active measures against them. Thousands of Cossacks scaled the walls; and not only put the defenders to the sword, but sacked their houses, abused their wives, and slew their children. Their leader, drunk with brandy and stained with blood, was seen in the streets eagerly seeking after the governor. Upon discovering his prey lying wounded in a church, he ordered him to be taken to the top of a high tower, and dashed to the ground in his presence. Prince Prozorowski's fate was the revengeful offering of Stenko Razin to the memory of his brother, arbitrarily executed in the presence of Prince Dolgorouki. Thus crime begets crime; and while a great injustice perpetrated by men in high social position is often visited upon innocent corresponding parties, the retaliation is generally more terrible than the injury. The two boys of the governor were despatched; the metropolitan who endeavoured to save them was put to death; the mother was spared; and in the pillage of Astrachan the Tatars alone escaped unscathed, as the victims of Muscovite oppression.

This success invested the name of Stenko with the *éclat* of a conqueror in the eyes of the wild hordes of the steppes, while it strengthened his own ambition, and enlarged its sphere. Master of a city, a large heterogeneous force, and a number of vessels trading on the Volga to Astrachan, he contemplated the over-

throw of the Romanoff dynasty, the extinction of the noblesse, the freedom of the serfs, and the erection of independent principalities in the empire. There was much in the existing state of Russia to justify the hope of a successful revolution. The ecclesiastical measures of the reign had conjured up a host of malcontent spirits. Many priests, monks, nuns, and laymen, sympathised with the high-church views of the patriarch Nikon; and deemed his recent deposition an unholy triumph of the temporal over the spiritual power. Early in 1570, Alexis lost his eldest son, the heir apparent, to whom he was generally supposed to cherish the opposite of paternal feelings. Adroitly availing himself of these circumstances, Stenko caused it to be rumoured, that the ex-patriarch had escaped from the monastery in which he was confined, to put himself under his protection; and that the czarevitch was not dead, but had fled from a cruel father to seek safety in his camp. To sustain these representations, he had two barks set apart on the Volga as the temporary homes of the fugitives. One, covered with black velvet, was said to be for the accommodation of the deposed patriarch; the other, covered with red velvet, for the persecuted prince. A young Circassian was employed to personate the son of the czar, and the former head of the Church had his representative. While this trick had immense success, thousands of the Raskolniks joined the rebellion, simply anxious to

oppose themselves to Antichrist in the person of Alexis; and even nuns in male attire appeared in the ranks, to show their zeal for the unrevised formularies of the Church, by fighting against the innovator.

Thus recruited, the rebel host amounted to more than 100,000 men. But they were ill-armed, wholly undisciplined, and without the influence of a common motive to secure unity and vigour of action, while their chief, though a man of great personal daring, was an ignorant and reckless savage. Leaving a competent force in Astrachan, he ascended the Volga, and penetrated to the heart of the empire, gaining several victories over small armies of the czar by the mere force of numbers. The serfs facilitated the advance of their champion by flying to arms and murdering their lords. Nearly the whole basin of the river up to Nijni Novgorod was ruthlessly ravaged; and had Stenko pushed rapidly on to Moscow, he might have taken the capital, and perhaps permanently overthrown the throne of Alexis. But his propensity to pillage retarded his march, and afforded time for the concentration of a powerful defensive force; while, anxious to have their own share of plunder, his followers spread themselves in detached bands, and were easily cut up in detail. Surprised by Dolgorouki, the same man who had hung his brother, the best of his Cossacks were destroyed; and upon this single decisive defeat, the tide of his fortunes ebbed as rapidly as it had

swelled. His dupes fell from the height of confidence to the extreme of discouragement. Panic seizing the marauding parties, they broke up into smaller bodies, and were driven as dust before the whirlwind by the regiments of the empire. The peasants who had joined the insurrection sought to regain their homes; the barbarian hordes fled to the vast solitudes of the steppes; the gallant but misled Cossacks left their dead bodies on the banks of the Volga; and Stenko Razin became a wanderer. Wherever they were overtaken, the fugitives were slaughtered, till roads, rivers, ponds, villages, and homesteads, were encumbered with the multitude of corpses.

The Suburb of Hell was constituted upon the defeat of the rebellion. This name was given to a large level piece of grassy ground, near the town of Arsamas, in the country of the Morduates, where Dolgorouki established his head-quarters, and sat in judgment upon the captives taken. A tent was planted upon the site, to answer the purpose of a chapel, in which a number of Russian priests daily celebrated mass. In the front of the chapel, a likeness of the czar was placed, and every prisoner went upon his knees before it. Behind was a rack, and other instruments of torture, with rows of scaffolds and gallows extending several miles in length. The green grass was soon discoloured with blood. Those who were accounted the most guilty, after being subjected to the rack, had

the right hand and the left leg struck off. They were then impaled on long spikes upon the first row of scaffolds, and left to their horrible fate. The groans of the victims, the Hallelujahs from the chapel, and the croaking of crows and ravens, made a strangely horrible concert, which the winds carried far and wide, to the terror of the population. The next in point of delinquency were quartered alive upon the second row of scaffolds; and their sufferings, though severe, were shorter. The third class were simply beheaded upon the third row; the fourth were hanged; and the fifth were knouted. Women, married and maiden, were despatched upon different gallows; and children above thirteen years of age were cruelly treated. Married couples were hanged together; and whole families perished in companionship. A different death was reserved for the ecclesiastics. The monks and nuns were burnt to ashes. Among the latter, there was a handsome nun attired in the uniform of an officer, who had commanded a corps, and given signal proofs of courage. When brought before the tribunal, she boldly told Dolgorouki that if others had done their duty as she had, instead of erecting gallows, he would have taken to his heels. In the space of three months, 13,000 human beings were put to death in the Suburb of Hell; and birds of prey long haunted the site, attracted by the exposed mutilated bodies of the sufferers. But including the slain in fight on both

sides, the massacred, and the executed, not less than 300,000 persons perished owing to the tyranny of a Russian commander, and the revenge of a Cossack subaltern.

The ringleader, Stenko Razin, after a fugitive career, sought the hospitality of the Hetman of the Don Cossacks. But that chieftain, whom he had practically superseded in his office, betrayed him into the hands of the czar, and sent him to Moscow. Alexis despatched a cart, drawn by three mules, to receive his rival as he approached the capital. Being placed in the vehicle, arrayed in rags, and chained by the neck and two hands to its hinder part, he entered the metropolitan city; and was executed in the citadel, having been quartered, on the 6th of June 1671. Stenko, to the last moment of his existence, maintained his firmness. He invoked the memory of his brother in his final agony; and when one of his legs and arms had been struck off, he whistled!

CHAP. VIII.

PETER I., AND THE STRELITZ.

INTERMARRIAGE WITH SUBJECTS. — MARRIAGE OF ALEXIS — HIS FAMILY.— THE PRINCESS SOPHIA — HER INTRIGUES WITH THE STRELITZ. — MASSACRE OF THE NARISKINS. — IVAN AND PETER CO-CZARS. — REGENCY OF SOPHIA. — YOUTH OF PETER. — FALL OF SOPHIA. — PETER'S MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS.—FOUNDS A NAVY.—GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF RUSSIA. — CAPTURE OF AZOF. — HOSTILE PARTIES. — VIEWS OF THE MUSCOVITE FACTION. — CONSPIRACY AGAINST PETER. — HIS DANGER AND ESCAPE. — PETER IN HOLLAND AND ENGLAND. — INSURRECTION OF THE STRELITZ. — PUNISHMENT AND ABOLITION OF THE CORPS.

It was the ordinary usage, down to a comparatively recent date, for the Russian sovereigns to intermarry with their own subjects. The practice had its origin in that ignorant self-importance, so commonly distinctive of uncivilised races, which leads them to look with contempt upon foreign nations as inferior to themselves. But it was productive of the most mischievous effects. The family of the czarina naturally acquired great influence in the state, often lost discretion, waxed arrogant, and provoked jealousies. In the case of a second marriage, then, two families were prominent,

and competed for the pre-eminence, becoming the heads of rival factions. The evil was specially conspicuous immediately after the death of Alexis, who twice allied himself with subjects, and left children by both his wives, either too feeble or too young to govern. This position of the throne tempted the respective connections of the princes to a struggle for the predominance, in which the Strelitz were invited to take part. Becoming thereby conscious of their power, the standing military corps threw off all subordination to authority, converted the capital into a scene of turbulence, and stained it with the blood of their victims, till the strong hand of Peter displayed its vigour, decimated their ranks, and destroyed the order.

The last marriage of Alexis transpired under circumstances which may be detailed, as illustrative of the manners of the court at the period.

The table was spread for the evening meal in the house of Matveof, his principal minister, when the czar entered. "Your supper," said he, "looks so inviting, that I am tempted to partake of it; but it must be on condition that nothing is altered on my account." Soon after seating himself, the wife of the minister appeared, with her son and a young lady. Though contrary to custom, the royal guest insisted upon their sitting down, and found himself placed directly opposite the subject nymph. Alexis eyed the girl, lost his appetite, and became abstracted. "I thought," said he,

at last, addressing his host, "your son was your only child." "Your Majesty," replied the minister, "is right. This young lady is the daughter of Kyrilla Nariskin, a relation and friend, who lives on his own estate. My wife has undertaken her education, and, with the blessing of God, we hope to settle her honourably in the world." The supper being over, the family retired. The czar then observed to Matveof, that he ought to think of a suitable match for the young lady, to which he responded, that, though endowed with good and amiable qualities, she was far from being rich, and that his own fortune would not allow him to give her any considerable portion.

Some days afterwards, Alexis returned to the subject of the young lady, and told Matveof that he had found a gentleman who might probably be agreeable to her, one who needed no fortune, and was already in love with his beautiful ward. The minister was, of course, eager to know the name of the proposed suitor. "Well," said the czar, after some suspense, "you may tell the young lady it is I who am in love with her, and am determined to make her my wife." Matveof, surprised and confounded, implored his master to desist from his purpose. He stated that he had already a sufficient number of enemies at court, who witnessed with envious eyes the favour he enjoyed; and that the great noble families would be intensely mortified and exasperated, if he wedded a comparatively humble girl.

Alexis calmed his apprehensions, and avowed his firm determination to persevere. "Since then it is so," replied he, "I have one favour to beg, as well for the sake of Natalia Nariskin as for myself, which is, that you will not carry your wishes into execution without conforming to the usual customs of the country, and thus saving appearances. Assemble at your court the daughters of the most distinguished families, among whom Natalia will be present, and let your choice be made in public." It was an old usage, when the czars wanted a wife, to collect from all parts of the empire a bevy of ladies, eligible by birth and beauty for the dignity of czarina, in order for the would-be husband to make a choice. They were, of course, superbly dressed for the occasion by their friends, and were magnificently entertained in the palace, where they resided with the sovereign, that he might observe their deportment and temper. Upon the election being made, it was signified to the favoured one by the gift of a handkerchief or a ring; while the disappointed candidates were dismissed to their homes with suitable presents. This coarse practice had its origin in the light estimation in which females were held in a rude age; and could only exist in a very low condition of society. Being so easily susceptible of abuse, it is probably true, as alleged, that great scandals were committed. The charms of 1500 damsels perplexed Vassili V., whose captivating portrait is at the head of

this volume. But upon the occasion in question, about sixty unmarried daughters of the principal nobility were convened, among whom Natalia appeared, who was raised to the throne in September 1670.

Six years afterwards Alexis died, leaving two sons, Feodore and Ivan, with Sophia, and three other daughters, by his first wife, a Milovslanski; and one son and one daughter, Peter and Natalia, by the second, a Nariskin. Feodore, as the eldest son, succeeded, though his accession was opposed by the Nariskins, on the ground of incapacity. The prince was of sickly constitution, and wholly unfit for business. His speedy death was anticipated; while his next brother, Ivan, the heir presumptive, laboured under greater disabilities, being nearly blind, hardly able to articulate, and subject from infancy to fits of epilepsy. In these circumstances, their sister Sophia, an able and ambitious woman, not relishing the life of a convent, to which the Russian princesses were commonly doomed, intrigued to escape its disagreeables and appropriate the government to herself. She pretended a more than ordinary affection for her brother, and complained bitterly of her unhappiness in not being allowed to visit one so tenderly beloved, in order to attend upon him in his sickness. Having obtained permission by such representations to leave her convent, she assiduously conciliated public favour by unremitting attentions to Feodore, with affable behaviour to the courtiers;

and succeeded by these means in becoming the real directress of the state. But upon his anticipated death taking place in 1682, Sophia was at once disappointed and enraged, for, passing over Ivan as wholly disqualified for empire, he named for the succession his half-brother Peter. The latter, though only a boy of ten years, had already evinced symptoms of a masculine spirit; and his nomination was fatal to her hopes, as it involved the transference of power from the Milovslanskis to the Nariskins.

The princess was not more ambitious than unscrupulous. In attempting to defeat the disposition made of the crown, she took council with Prince Galitzin, placed him at the head of her party, and summoned family connections to her assistance. In an assembly of the great officers of state and the clergy, she represented that her brother Ivan ought to succeed by right of seniority, in preference to her step-brother Peter, knowing that the incompetency of the former would prolong her own power. Not content with this, she secretly invoked the aid of Kouvanski, commander of the Strelitz, and induced him to inflame the passions of the soldiery against the Nariskins by monstrous accusations, in order to ensure their destruction. They were charged with having employed a Dutch physician to poison Feodore, and with having attempted to strangle Ivan. A list of forty nobles was delivered to the military, as persons worthy of death, being enemies

to the state. Moscow was soon a scene of anarchy and bloodshed. The proscribed were dragged from their hiding-places in the churches, and put to death in the most barbarous manner. Never did Turkish Janissaries exhibit greater ferocity than the Strelitz. The corps had undergone little change of character since the time of its institution by the Terrible; and included among its members some of the lowest rabble in the capital. Peter, lest his own life should be taken, was removed by the care of friends, with his mother and sister, to the Troitzka or Trinity monastery, founded by St. Sergius, sixty versts from Moscow. It is said that two pursuers dashed after the fugitives into the convent; and that one of them, with uplifted sword, was about to strike the young prince in the church, when his companion interfered, exclaiming —"Comrade, not before the altar!"

At the commencement of the insurrection, the leaders forced their way into the palace, where the princes Dolgorouki and Matveof were seized, and thrown out of the windows, falling upon the pikes of the soldiers in the court below. The bodies were stript, and dragged in triumph naked through the square. Little care was taken to establish the identity of individuals before despatching them. Thus Soltikoff, a young noble belonging to the Milovslanski party, being met with in the streets, and mistaken for a Nariskin, was instantly destroyed. Upon discovering

their error, the murderers conveyed the body to his father for interment, who, not daring to complain, rewarded them for bringing the horrible present. While searching for Vongad, the Dutch physician, the soldiers encountered a German of the same profession. "You are a doctor," said they, "and if you have not poisoned our master Feodore, you have poisoned others, and therefore merit death." Upon the Dutchman being captured, disguised in the attire of a beggar, he was reserved for a terrible fate along with a brother of the dowager-czaritza, who was concealed in the palace. Suspecting this to be the case, the furious mob threatened immediately to fire the building, unless he was surrendered. His sisters repaired to his place of concealment to bid him farewell. The patriarch heard his confession, and administered the last rites of religion. Then holding an image of the Virgin in one hand, he led forth the victim, hoping that the Strelitz would be induced to spare him. The attempt was in vain. Erecting a kind of tribunal, the prince and the physician were formally condemned to be cut in pieces, the doom usually awarded to parricides in China and other parts of Asia, called the punishment of 10,000 slices. The fearful sentence was executed; and the heads, feet, and hands of the sufferers were exposed on the points of a balustrade. While executing the vengeance of others, the soldiers seized the opportunity to redress some grievances of their

own, endured from their superior officers. Nine of their colonels had a taste of the battogues, a species of corporal punishment similar to the bambooing of the Chinese, in both of which the chastised are compelled to thank their executioners.

To terminate this bloody fray, and restore peace to the capital, it was arranged that the imbecile Ivan should be proclaimed czar along with Peter, while Sophia held the office of regent. This was equivalent to constituting the princess the real sovereign, the elder czar being an idiot, and the younger a child. She enjoyed all the honours of sovereignty, had the first seat in council, signed state papers, and her bust figured on the coin of the realm. Prince Galitzin, an able man, became the principal minister. But Sophia, in suborning the commander of the Strelitz to further her views. had made him of too much consequence in his own esteem to be content with his former position. Having contributed so much to her elevation, Kouvanski aspired to the high reward of sharing her power and dignity, either in the capacity of first councillor or husband. Instead of being thus advanced, like most tools, having done his work, he experienced ingratitude and neglect. Disappointed and enraged, the ruffian contemplated the fearful revenge of destroying the entire royal house, by means of his myrmidon soldiers, and appropriating the throne to himself. This was in 1685, when Peter was thirteen years of age. Upon

the foul plot being fortunately discovered, the two czars, with their sister, and the whole court, left the capital for the secure asylum of the Troitzka monastery. Having prepared defensive means to justify a bold measure, Kouvanski was decoyed by artful management towards the convent, as if to negotiate, accompanied by a small detachment of his force. Being waylaid, overpowered, and captured, the rebel was beheaded on the spot. On hearing of the fate of their chief, the Strelitz were furious. But the great and petty nobles appearing in arms against them, at the head of their serfs, they deemed it prudent to conciliate, and became as abject in their submission as their attitude had been hostile.

The youth of Peter was passed in comparative obscurity; and without any education consistent with his position. While intentionally excluded by his sister from participation in state affairs, she caused him to be surrounded with vulgar, debauched companions, in order to indispose or disqualify him for the task of government. But nature had endowed him with colossal vigour of body and energy of mind. Though he fell into the snare, its design was entirely frustrated. His morals were corrupted without his intellect being enfeebled, or his health irreparably failing. Inquisitive, active, persevering, and versatile in the extreme, he was dissipated but not idle, blended the practice of handicrafts with drinking brandy, turned from carous-

ing in taverns to manœuvre mimic fleets and armies, and gathered valuable information from his low associates, some of whom were adventurers from Western Europe. Considering his genius, industry, courage, and vigilance, had he been adequately enlightened and morally controlled in early life, he might have established for himself a just claim to the title of the Great, and have ranked with the Charlemagnes and Alfreds of history, instead of being an intellectual savage, a grand barbarian, but little elevated above the level of Mithridates, or our first Plantagenet. In reviewing his career, it is impossible to avoid the expression of admiration at his superiority to national prejudices, large views, and invincible pertinacity, while feelings of disgust and abhorrence are provoked by his abominable wickedness and cruelty.

At the age of seventeen, by the advice of friends, Peter married Eudokhia Lapukhin, the daughter of a noble; and in the same year, 1689, the entire management of the government came into his hands, more through the criminal ambition of his sister than his own aspirings. From indications of character, the keen-eyed lady-regent perceived that he could not be kept much longer in the bonds of tutelage; and that, while her own term of power was daily becoming more precarious, the danger was imminent of being compelled to exchange royal state for an obscure and monotonous

conventual life. To avert this reverse, Sophia, in concert with Galitzin, is charged with the dark design of seizing the person of her brother, in order to deprive him of liberty, if not of life, employing the new chief of the Strelitz to execute the purpose. Apprised of his peril by some repentant parties to the plot, Peter found safety for the third time in the monastery of the Trinity; and, thoroughly roused to action, he determined in that formidable religious stronghold to assert his right to the sovereignty. The boyars of his party, with their retainers, and, numerous personal friends in the capital, hastened to his side, and secured his position. Upon finding him too strong to be resisted, the regent denied the conspiracy, and implored an interview with her brother, hoping to retain some share of authority by effecting an amicable arrangement. But he inexorably doomed her to the life she dreaded; and Sophia passed unpitied from a throne to a convent. An unsuccessful attack upon the Crimea was the principal event of her regency. Galitzin, whose life was spared at the intercession of a relative, forfeited his immense estates; and was banished upon a slender pittance to a desolate spot in the province of Archangel, while the commander of the Strelitz and other accomplices were executed. Peter was now the real and only sovereign; for though his brother Ivan survived to the year 1696, he had merely a nominal

connection with the government, and lived in complete retirement.

The military arts which had been the sports of childhood and youth were energetically pursued by Peter from the moment that he took possession of the government. To substitute a disciplined standing army for the seditious rabble of the Strelitz was one of his first objects, a measure which might have cost him his life, had it been openly announced or incautiously prosecuted. The czar was guided and aided in his plans by Le Fort, a Frenchman, and General Patrick Gordon, a Scotchman, who enjoyed his confidence, and made him acquainted with the advance of the western nations in war, navigation, commerce, and science. Sensible of the comparative barbarism of his countrymen, he thenceforth contemplated raising them to the general standard of Europeans; and addressed himself to the undertaking with all the passionate energy of his nature. Yet, though highly honourable the attempt, the regeneration of a nation blinded by prejudice, steeped in ignorance and sloth, is a task far too gigantic to be accomplished in one man's life, and altogether impossible by the means employed, chiefly the appliance of a despot's power and will. For the army, regiments were trained and accoutred after the European model; foreigners were enlisted, German adventurers, French Huguenots, Scotch, English, and Irish Jacobites; mock sieges and sham fights were

appointed to exercise the troops, some of which, for want of soldierly discipline, degenerated into scenes of brawl or downright battle. The sovereign himself gave an example of submission to military schooling, passing through the gradations of private soldier in the ranks, serjeant, and lieutenant. In addition to Le Fort and Gordon, a remarkable personage was raised from the lowest condition to intimacy with Peter. This was Alexander Menzikoff, a name which has since been prominent in Russian history. He was born of peasant parents in a village on the banks of the Volga, sought a livelihood as a boy in Moscow, cried hot-rolls and mince-pies in the streets as the servant of a pastry-cook, sang pleasant songs as he vended his confectionary, was patronised by Le Fort upon attracting his attention, obtained by his means the place of a page at court, and rose to the rank of general, governor, prince, and prime-minister.

While forming an army, Peter was equally intent upon the creation of a navy. Though subject from childhood to a dread of water, amounting to positive hydrophobia, the effect of an accidental circumstance, such was the power of his will, that he mastered the infirmity so completely as to delight in navigation as soon as its importance to conquest and commerce was perceived. Observing a tiny sailing bark on the river of Moscow, which had been built by Brandt, the Dutch shipwright, in the time of his father, its

different construction to the ordinary flat pontoons of the country immediately excited his curiosity. The builder, then living in obscurity in the capital, was summoned to refit the vessel; and instruct him in the art of managing the craft. Delighted with his first experiments upon the water, the czar aspired to sail upon a broader expanse. He caused a little fleet of two frigates and three yachts to be built by Brandt and other Hollanders, in which he embarked upon the great lake Peipus. From the lake, his views extended to the wide ocean; and having visited Archangel to inspect the large European merchantmen in the port, he made a voyage to Ponoi on the coast of Lapland, serving himself in the various offices of a seafaring life. But no sooner were the signal advantages of a marine apprehended than the thought was marred by that of the unfortunate geographical position of the country for naval purposes. It had no convenient communication by sea with the great marts of trade and seats of civilisation; and only extended to the ocean in a northerly direction, where all navigation is suspended for six months in the year by thick-ribbed ice. Since the time of the early grand-princes Russia had not possessed a rood of land upon the Black Sea, and only for a very brief period upon the Baltic. Turkey commanded upon all the shores of the former, while Sweden dominated upon the coast-line of the latter. This was a difficulty in the way of profitable naval

adventure, which could only be overcome by a successful war.

Peter looked southerly, in the first instance, in search of a convenient maritime territory; and declared war against Turkey in order to obtain access to the Black Sea. In 1695, his newly raised army marched to the attack of Azof, at the mouth of the Don. The first campaign proved a failure. But in the following year, when aided by a fleet which descended the river from Voronetz, he mastered the strong fortress; and extended his frontier to waters communicating with the Channel of Constantinople. Upon this success, he strengthened the fortifications, enlarged and deepened the harbour, and made arrangements to increase his fleet, intending to pass from the Sea of Azof to the Black Sea, and obtain the sovereignty of its northern shores by conquering the Crimea. To prevent this purpose, the Turks built the fort of Yenikale on the Strait of Kertch, commanding the passage between the two basins. But what Peter specially desired for Russia was a sea-board admitting of intercourse, free, easy, and direct, with the advanced knowledge of Western Europe, in order to import it among his own subjects. This could only be realised by extending the empire to the shores of the Baltic, held by warlike Sweden, studded with strong fortresses, and defended by a comparatively powerful fleet. To succeed in any attempt at conquest in this direction, it was requisite

for the army to be vastly strengthened and improved, and for a marine to be established capable of competing with the Scandinavian navy. Steadily contemplating the enterprise as a prospective event, and measuring its difficulty, the czar prepared for it by sending a number of young nobles into Germany, Holland, and Italy, to study shipbuilding, navigation, military engineering, and the tactics of war; and resolved to travel in the same direction for his own improvement in martial and naval arts, as well as to learn the general wants of Russia by personal observation of the state of Europe.

But these projects exposed their author to serious danger. Two parties had been formed in the state; one, anxious to render Russia European by assimilating the people to their advanced western neighbours; a second, bigotedly attached to ancient usages, hostile to every improvement from without, and eager to keep up the barrier raised by superstition and despotism between the country and Europe. The former party was led by the czar, the latter by the clergy. Eudokhia, the wife of Peter, taught by her confessor to regard every innovation as sacrilege, and every foreigner as a corrupter, was a stanch adherent to old Muscovite principles. So annoying did she become to her husband by opposition to his views, that he repudiated her, after an alliance rendered most unhappy by domestic criminality on his part, and indis-

creetly expressed jealousy on hers. A son, the unfortunate czarevitch Alexis, was the fruit of the marriage. The free manners of the czar, his dislike of ostentation, active habits, and odd vocations — a sovereign, a soldier, a sailor, a carpenter, and a smith, — were viewed with dissatisfaction by the disciples of the old school, as utterly contrary to the laws of courtly etiquette and the pursuits of an orthodox monarch. His passion for boats, galleys, and ships was an inexplicable phenomenon, for no real Muscovite ever became a mariner by preference; while the expenses entailed by the army and navy led to taxation peculiarly burdensome to those who could not appreciate its object, or were rancorously opposed to it. Even his proposal to unite the Volga and the Don by a canal, in order to facilitate the conveyance of stores and provisions to the fleet at Azof, was condemned as impious; for Providence, it was alleged, had plainly forbidden the union of the rivers by constituting them distinct. But national feeling was most offended by his extensive enlistment of sacrilegious foreigners in the public service, and the scheme of foreign travel. For a Russian, much less a Russian sovereign, to quit the orthodox land for the realms of heresy on an errand of instruction, was vehemently denounced by the clergy as contrary to the law of God, who had expressly restrained the children of Israel from com-

munion with the nations around them, lest they became partakers of their sins.

The fruit of narrow views and ignorant exasperation was a conspiracy against the government and life of the czar, intended to take effect a few days before his proposed journey. The Strelitz, who saw the downfal of their own power in the new military arrangements, were specially malcontent; and two of their officers, Sukanim and Tsikler, placed themselves at the head of a plot, to maintain the predominance of the body. It was arranged to fire the capital by night; and as Peter, according to ancient custom, was certain to hurry to the scene of conflagration, in order to superintend the extinction of the flames, he was to be murdered in the confusion, the foreigners massacred, and Sophia restored to the throne. As the appointed time approached for the execution of this dark deed, the conspirators met in the house of Sukanim to take counsel, and arm themselves with the courage which intoxicating drink inspires for the commission of crime. But two of the number became fearful; and obtained permission to leave their comrades for a short time, assigning some plausible excuse, and promising to return before midnight, when the dreadful work was to commence. Instead of doing this, they hastened to the palace, and betrayed the plot. Peter immediately wrote to a captain of his guards, ordering him to surround the dwelling with his

troop in perfect silence at a given time; but committed the important mistake of inserting *eleven* o'clock for ten. Soon after ten, thinking the order executed, he proceeded alone to the house; and was surprised to find no soldiers present, and the doors unguarded. But hearing a great uproar in the interior, he supposed that his guards had already entered, and secured the traitors. Boldly advancing, he suddenly found himself in the midst of the ruffians, unsupported and unarmed, who had sworn his destruction, and were revelling in anticipation of it.

Never was Peter in greater danger. Yet, while fully sensible of his peril, and irritated at the supposed negligence of his officer, he concealed his emotions, and maintained perfect self-possession. Carelessly seating himself, he said, in a natural tone of voice, that, hearing their revelry on passing the house, he had entered to join the festive circle. Taking up a glass, he then drank to the health of the assassins; and they returned the compliment. Though disconcerted and alarmed by the unexpected presence of the czar, the conspirators gradually recovered from panic; and finding him completely in their power, significant looks and signs began to be exchanged. As eleven o'clock approached one of them observed in a low voice to Sukanim, "Brother, it is time!" The latter replied, for some unknown reason, "Not yet." At this moment Peter heard the footsteps of the soldiers; and,

springing from his seat, he exclaimed, "If it is not yet time for you, scoundrel, it is for me!" The guard entered; and the czar was safe. He struck the captain for his presumed negligence; and then embraced him, upon his own order being produced, in which the hour of eleven was distinctly written. This event occurred February 2. 1697. On the 5th of March the great square before the Kremlin was the scene of an execution which brings to mind the dark ages of Muscovite tyranny. The criminals first suffered the rack; then arms and legs were successively cut off; and after this infernal process, if life remained in the mutilated body, it was extinguished by beheading. The heads were finally fixed upon spikes on the top of a column, the sides of which were garnished with the severed limbs, while the trunks were left on the ground at the base for the dogs to devour.

Trusting to the effect of this abominable display of ferocity, Peter set out upon his western tour, leaving General Patrick Gordon with a chosen body of troops to overawe the capital, and stationing the Strelitz on the Polish frontier. "It was a thing," says Voltaire, "unparalleled in history, either ancient or modern, for a sovereign of five-and-twenty years of age to withdraw from his kingdom for the sole purpose of learning the art of government." This statement, repeated by subsequent writers, involves a compliment to Peter which passes the bounds of truth, unless great limita-

tions are applied to it. In the theory of government he sought no instruction, for he felt no deficiency. A despot by birth, condition, and temperament, it never entered his imagination that rule ought to be administered, or could be with success, otherwise than by allowing to the people no choice, and subjecting them to imperial ukases, enforced by the rack, the hatchet, and the halter. But he fully comprehended their shortcomings in material arts, with the geographical extension which the country needed in order to its improvement by intimate intercourse with the advanced nations; and to qualify himself for the task of raising Russia to their level in artisanship, commerce, and war, was his prime object in visiting Western Europe. The travelling party consisted of Le Fort, Golowin, governor of Siberia, and Voristzin, foreign secretary, who were invested with the character of ambassadors extraordinary, and in whose suite the czar appeared in the incognito of a private gentleman. With officers, guards, pages, secretaries, and favourites, one of whom was Menzikoff, the entire retinue included 200 persons. Peter's immediate attendants were a valet, a livery servant, and a dwarf, the latter being invariably a part of the royal establishment of Muscovy. This remarkable journey commenced in April, 1697.

In the course of a rapid tour through Esthonia and Livonia, their military positions, resources, and means

of communication were carefully noted, with a view to wresting those provinces from Sweden, and realising the grand design of gaining for Russia an outlet on the Baltic. Riga was reconnoitred; but, wishing to inspect the fortifications, the governor, Count d'Alberg, refused permission. Peter took this very natural conduct in high dudgeon; and assigned it subsequently, with a very bad grace, as one reason for declaring war against the Swedes. Passing through Konigsberg, Dantzic, and Northern Germany, he proceeded in advance of the embassy to Amsterdam, and established himself in its neighbourhood at the shipbuilding village of Saardam. Shunning publicity, and leaving honours to his representatives, he assumed the humble name of Peter Timmerman; and became the hired servant of a shipwright, labouring with the rest of the artificers at rope-making, sail-making, carpentry, and smith's work. Though with the revenue of an empire at his command, he received his weekly wages, and lived upon them; rose early, often lighted his own fire, and cooked his own pot. Upon his true character becoming known, the people crowded from the capital to the dockyard to see the royal artisan; an intrusion upon his privacy which always provoked the most violent fits of passion. Not content with working himself, he insisted upon his companions descending to the same drudgery. Menzikoff, though forced to comply, had no relish for boat-

building or mast-making, and bitterly complained of his blistered hands. Having become practically acquainted with the more prominent arts in naval architecture, Peter visited the Texel to examine the Greenland fishing ships, inspected the manufactories of Holland, and frequented the markets. Being conversant with the Dutch language, he attended anatomical lectures at the hospitals; and learned to perform some simple surgical operations, as tooth-drawing and blood-letting, which he practised with advantage to soldiers and civilians upon his return to Russia. After spending eight months in the country, he embarked at Helvoetsluys on board a small British squadron provided for his accommodation, and was conveyed to the Thames by Admiral Mitchell, reaching London January 21. 1698.

The reigning sovereign, William III., received the czar the day after his arrival at Kensington Palace; a house in Norfolk-street, Strand, close to the river, was placed at his disposal; and Osborne, Marquis of Carmarthen, afterwards the second Duke of Leeds, a naval officer, was appointed to attend upon him. Peter was taken to see the lions of the metropolis; but only the charms of an actress at the theatre at Drury Lane, and the beautifully arranged armoury in the Tower, seem to have made much impression. The sight of a launch at Chatham was more to his taste; and a journey to Portsmouth, in order to witness a review

of the fleet at Spithead, led to the remark, that he considered the position of an English admiral far happier than that of a Russian czar. It was the singular fortune of Bishop Burnet to converse with a Rochester on his death-bed, hear some of the last words of a Russell before he went to the scaffold, and hold free discourse with a Muscovite monarch, through the medium of good interpreters, intent upon studying the arts of civilised life. The prelate relates, that he found him subject to convulsive motions over his body, the result doubtless of his fondness for strong drink. He describes him as a man of very hot temper, soon influenced, and very brutal in his passion, raising his natural heat by frequent recourse to brandy. His turn was for mechanics; and nature — so thought the bishop — seemed to have designed him rather to be a ship-carpenter than a great prince. "He told me," says Burnet, "he designed a great fleet at Azof, and with it to attack the Turkish empire." Little did the czar imagine that this policy, bequeathed to his successors, and never lost sight of by them through a century and a half, would lead the country in which he was a guest to collect its forces, and, in alliance with France, cover the Baltic, the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azof with squadrons, to resist the long-meditated aggression. Weary of the inquisitive throngs in the capital, Peter removed to a residence in the neighbourhood of Deptford dockyard, where he watched the

operations in process, mastered the science of ship-building and navigation, worked a small vessel on the river, had conversations with the astronomer Halley, who spoke German fluently, on the variation of the compass and the courses of the tides, and superintended alterations in the Royal Transport, a yacht presented to him by King William. His own present to the king, previous to his departure in May, was a rough ruby of great value, which he took out of his waistcoat pocket, wrapped in a piece of brown paper. Three reigning czars, Peter, Alexander I., and Nicholas, have visited our shores, with several princes and princesses of the imperial house; but no member of the British royal family ever trod the soil of Russia till the Duke of Cambridge, during the present war, landed in the Crimea.

Nearly five hundred persons, seamen and artificers of almost all grades, with some mathematicians, enlisted in the service of Russia during Peter's stay in England; and reached their destination in the Royal Transport by the way of Archangel. Ferguson, a scientific Scotchman, with two students from Christ's Hospital, was engaged to conduct a marine academy; and introduced into the Muscovite exchequer the arithmetical method of accounts, in place of the old mode of reckoning with balls strung upon a wire. Captain Perry, an engineer, was sent out to open communication by canal between the Volga and the Don. These parties had soon

reason to repent of their bargain, for the contracts made with them were either openly broken or evaded, while the natives did all in their power to annoy the foreigners. One of the students was murdered in the streets of Moscow. Ferguson narrowly escaped a similar fate; and, after preparing pupils, was unable to obtain his salary. Perry, at the end of six years, after repeatedly dunning the treasury, had to present a formal memorial complaining of his monthly subsistence money being deducted from his annual stipend, while the arrears due to him had been paid in depreciated coin. But the difficulty of abandoning a service with which they were dissatisfied was the greatest hardship. Once in Russia, it was a hard matter to get out, as the czar thought himself justified in detaining useful foreigners for the public good. Suspicions were raised against those who wished to leave the country as a pretext for detention; and pertinacious ambassadorial interference was necessary in order to obtain a passport. Those who had entered the army or navy fared better than the civilians, and became permanently domiciled, some of them rising to high rank and office.

After passing through Holland, and visiting Austria on his return, Peter intended to see Italy. But intelligence of home troubles led him to hurry back to his dominions, where he arrived in August; and soon gave evidence that, however improved in artisanship by

intercourse with western civilisation, it had not produced the slightest effect upon his principles and passions. Upon quitting the empire the public discontents gradually revived; and during his long absence of sixteen months they were so far strengthened, that the mutinous Strelitz left their posts in the provinces, and marched upon Moscow to change the direction of the state. General Gordon attacked the rebels with vigour; and so completely defeated them, that, upon the return of his master, the fate of the captives was the only question to be determined. On the day after his arrival he commenced his proceedings by liberally rewarding the troops who had most distinguished themselves in suppressing the insurrection; and then let loose all the savageness of his nature against the insurgent prisoners. Guilty as they were, it is impossible to frame an excuse or palliation for the conduct of the czar. Day by day he presided over their examination by torture, and feasted his eyes with the spectacle of their miserable death. Two thousand were hanged by his guards. Others were beheaded, kneeling in rows of fifties, before trunks of trees laid on the ground. As if to leave no vocation untried, Peter himself turned headsman. With the brandy-cup in one hand, and the axe in the other, he chopped off heads, drinking twenty successive draughts as he rendered twenty successive subjects headless. It was in October, when the frost was setting in, that these

horrors were perpetrated; and throughout the following winter the stiffly frozen corpses of the victims, with their heads near them, were suffered to remain at the scenes of execution, as a terror to all passengers. The entire corps of the Strelitz was now suppressed by the survivors being drafted into the recently formed regiments, while fugitives of the order, and those who sheltered them, were placed under the ban of the empire. But, not content with this measure of vengeance, Peter visited with diabolical and gratuitous cruelty the immured Sophia. Though it was never proved that she had any guilty connection with the revolt, yet, as an address had been prepared inviting her to assume the crown, he caused three of the mutineers to be gibbeted before the window of her cell. Each held in his stiffened hand a copy of the fatal paper pointed towards the apartment of the princess.

CHAP. IX.

REFORMS, CONQUESTS, AND PROJECTS OF PETER.

CHANGE OF COSTUME. — CONDITION OF WOMEN. — SOCIAL ASSEMBLIES. — THE JULIAN CALENDAR ADOPTED. — CIVIL ADMINISTRATION. — NEW NOBILITY. — ECCLESIASTICAL POLICY. — HOLY DIRECTING SYNOD. — TOLERATION — MILITARY CAREER OF PETER. — BATTLE OF NARVA. — FOUNDATION OF ST. PETERSBURG. — BATTLE OF PULTOWA. — PEACE OF THE PRUTH. — DEVASTATIONS IN SWEDEN. — PEACE OF NYSTADT. — CAMPAIGN ON THE CASPIAN. — DEATH OF PETER. — PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS. — FARCES. — POLICY OF THE REIGN. — ENGLAND AND RUSSIA.

FROM the date of his return from the West, Peter commenced a series of reforms in civil and ecclesiastical affairs, and in the social usages of the people, which he prosecuted with indefatigable ardour to the end of his reign, amid the toils of war and the labours of diplomacy. To remove the visible sign of distinction between the Russians and the western Europeans, he ordered a change of costume. The men were to shave their beards, and abandon their long flowing vests belted round the waist, characteristic of Asiatics, substituting short, tight-fitting coats, patterns of which were hung up at the gates of the towns. Two classes were exempt from the change of dress, the priests and

serfs; the former, because a loose, pompous habit was identified with their profession; and the latter in order to recommend the new style to the upper and middle grades of society, as distinguishing them from the common herd. Corresponding alterations were directed in the garments of the women. The courtiers consented without much reluctance to the change of attire; but were not quite so submissive about losing the beard, considering it an ornament to the countenance, besides being convenient in a cold climate. Why, it was asked with reason, deprive chins of their natural covering, which for six months in the year require the additional protection of a fur collar? The czar was obliged to superintend the execution of his order at court. Whitworth, the British ambassador, states in his despatches, that most of the chief nobility were shaved in his presence, where there was no room to dispute his will. But the great mass of the people were violently enraged by the ordinance, valuing the appendage not only as a national distinction, but as a sign of orthodoxy. The scenes that occurred were ludicrous and brutal. Venerable grey-beards might be seen in the streets scampering at full speed from executioners armed with the razor, as from so many hangmen; while those who were caught and shaved, lost skin as well as hair in the rough performance of the office. Whitworth relates, that the governor of Astrachan stationed his officers at all the church-doors,

who pulled out the beards of several persons by the roots, and cut off the women's loose garments from the middle. Peter was at last obliged to compromise to avoid a bloody insurrection; and consented to his subjects remaining unshorn, upon payment of a copeck every time they passed the gate of a city. Many who were too poor to pay the tax, and lost their beards, religiously preserved them, and had them placed in their coffins, lest St. Nicholas should refuse their admittance into heaven, mistaking them for heretical foreigners.

It was usual, in accordance with eastern manners, for the Russian women to be secluded from general society; and for marriages to be exclusively arranged by parents, the young people not even seeing each other prior to the betrothment. Unhappy alliances and domestic crimes were grafted upon this despotic custom. Husbands brutally beat their wives upon the slightest provocation; and, notwithstanding a tremendous punishment, ill-used wives, driven to desperation, frequently dispatched their husbands. For wife-beating, even though death ensued, there was no penalty, for it was considered a corrective rather than a criminal proceeding. But in the case of a wife dispatching her husband, she was buried alive in the ground, standing upright, with the head only above the surface; and a watch was set to see that she was starved to death, by no relief being given. It was one

of the best parts of Peter's policy that he strove to re-construct Russian domestic life after the western model, though some of his measures for this purpose were injudicious, and he descended to frivolous details. Thus he ordained that every young couple should be personally acquainted for at least six weeks previous to the betrothing; and that women in general should be allowed a larger share of liberty, by the door of social intercourse being thrown open to them. While these measures were received with delight by the youth of both sexes, and the female population, the parties benefited by them were won over to the support of other innovations in which they had no direct personal interest. Three times a week the nobles and wealthy merchants in rotation were ordered to throw open their houses for evening parties; to which all persons of respectable condition were admissible, with their wives and daughters, from four o'clock to ten at night. Master-workmen, especially ship-carpenters and master-shipwrights, with the aristocracy and superior officers, are mentioned as eligible guests in a code issued by the czar for the regulation of these assemblies. But, with little respect for the decencies of society, and characteristic semi-barbarism, he enacted, that every transgressor of the rules of the code should be compelled instantly to empty the "great eagle," a huge bottle of brandy.

As the eighteenth century approached the czar

corrected the calendar of the country, and assimilated it to the style of modern Europe. The pagan Sclavonic tribes began their year in the month of March. But towards the middle of the fourteenth century the Greek mode of computation was adopted in Russia, according to which the commencement of the year fell on the 1st of September. This continued till the time of Peter, who, to remove a distinction from the civilised nations, as well as sensible of the inconvenience of retaining a difference, ordered the year to date from the 1st of January. The alteration took effect January 1. 1700, which was observed as a high holiday at Moscow. Salutes were fired; the bells rang; and the streets and houses were illuminated at night. The change created dissatisfaction, as it puzzled the people at first in their computations. A number of ignorant priests also railed against it, being persuaded that as God made the world in September, he meant the Muscovite era, which then dated from the creation, to be reckoned from that month. In making this correction, Peter adopted the old Julian calendar, as the reformed Gregorian calendar had not then been introduced into England. As the Julian reckoning, still used in Russia, is eleven days behind the Gregorian, the Russian January 1. is our January 12.

In the civil administration, Peter got rid of old uncouth names, substituting for boyars, okolnitchi, and

dumnie-diaki, the more euphonous titles of presidents, counsellors, and senators. He superseded the boyarskoi dvor, court of boyars, or the cabinet, with a senate dependent upon himself; and instituted imperial colleges, each having charge of a particular department of public business. Instead of raising the revenue chiefly by the nobles levying it upon their dependents, and paying over to the public treasury as much as might be convenient, he divided the empire into districts, and appointed receivers for the crown in each. But while this measure enriched the exchequer, and deprived the landholders of a source of income, it increased rather than lessened the hardships of the community. The tax-collectors, having a mere pittance for their salary, took care to wring it out of the unfortunate people; and being armed with the unlimited power of a despotic government, they had recourse to the most abominable oppression to enrich themselves. Upon the old aristocracy — an indolent, superstitious, and stiff-necked race, fond of pomp, proud of their birth and wealth,—the iron hand of Peter fell with crushing weight. He began by stripping them of their retainers, whom he transformed into soldiers; sent their sons abroad to acquire knowledge, or had them trained under his own eye; deprived them finally of all social distinctions, with the single exception of the right of appearing at court, unless they rose to rank by actual service; and origi-

nated a new order of nobility, comprehending all persons holding specified civil and military offices under the crown, which were thrown open to all subjects above the class of serfs. No means could have been devised more directly calculated to humble the old aristocracy, and reduce to insignificance a race of obstructives. But however working well for is immediate object, and plausible in appearance, the system has been prolific of hideous evils; and is at present the curse of Russia, subjecting its millions to the yoke of administrative tyranny, in addition to that of the imperial despotism. The civil service being the easiest road to social consideration, an enormous number of *employés* gladly connect themselves with its various departments at a nominal salary, who subsist by extortion and pillage, ambitious to gain the lowest noble rank, or eager to escape from the oppression and contempt to which the non-privileged classes are subject.

The ecclesiastical policy of the czar was bold yet cautious. In the year 1702 the patriarch Adrian died; and with him expired the Russian patriarchate. The high dignitaries had too often interfered with temporal affairs, assuming an authority independent of the throne, and superior to it, for Peter to suffer the office to be continued. But though resolved not to confer the dignity again, he did not immediately announce his intention; but pleaded the multiplicity

of business, as an excuse for not being able to attend to so grave a matter as the appointment of a new ecclesiastical chief. Having gained time, he constituted the metropolitan of Rezan administrator of the patriarchal functions, but with only power to decide upon very indifferent questions. In more important affairs he was to consult with other bishops; and finally to refer everything to the determination of the sovereign. Thus clergy and laity were gradually accustomed to live without a patriarch; and Peter became the real head of the Church, without formally assuming the station. Nearly twenty years rolled on, when, in January 1721, he summoned a spiritual consistory for the management of ecclesiastical affairs; under the title of the Holy Directing Synod. At a meeting of the synod, the czar being present, a petition was read from some of the superior clergy praying for the appointment of a patriarch. He heard the document in silence, then arose, struck his breast with one hand, drew his hanger with the other, and striking the table before him with the weapon, vehemently exclaimed, "Here is your patriarch!" Though this proceeding provoked angry murmurs, and a free muttering of the name of Antichrist by priests and monks, there was no avowed opposition, — the hanger triumphed. Since this period, the church has remained under the direction of a synod or sacred college, the members of which are nominated by the crown, and take a stringent oath

of submission: — "I swear fidelity and allegiance as servant and subject to my natural and true sovereign, and to his august successors, whom he shall please to nominate, by virtue of the incontestible power for that purpose, of which he is possessed. I acknowledge him to be the supreme judge of this spiritual college. I swear by the all-seeing God that I understand and mean this oath in the full force and sense which the words convey to those who read or hear it." The residence of the former patriarchs at Moscow is now called the Synodalni Dom, or house of the Holy Synod, as the head-quarters of a section of the synod.

No proceeding of Peter gave greater offence to the clergy of the establishment than his toleration of different European religious professions, who were allowed to build churches; and the permission granted to Russians of either sex to intermarry with persons of other communions. Even his schismatical subjects, the Raskolniks, after dreadful severities, obtained a respite from persecution; but were required to wear a yellow patch upon their backs, a mark of humiliation which they considered a badge of distinction. "No," said he, when pressed again to persecute them, "I have learned that they are men of pure morals; they are the most upright merchants in the empire; and neither honour nor the welfare of the country will allow of their being martyred for their errors. Besides, that which a degrading badge and the force of reason

have been unable to effect, will never be accomplished by punishment. Let them therefore live in peace." With the view of increasing the revenue, Peter taxed the clergy like the rest of the people; and levied special contributions upon the monasteries, owing to the extensive landed estates with which they were endowed. Desirous of his soldiers, sailors, and artificers being hardy men, he mitigated the rigour of the fasts prescribed by the Church; and gave them a dispensation to eat flesh on fish days to keep up their strength. The chaplains in the army and fleet were ordered to set the example, a direction which they obeyed without reluctance. As the sovereign of a scantily peopled territory, to whose views of conquest a sufficient population to supply the waste of war was of vital importance, he regarded the celibacy of the monks and nuns as opposed to the public good. To correct the evil, he lessened the number of the convents, and ordained that no one under fifty years of age should be admitted to a cloistered life. It was further enacted, that at no age soever, should any person invested with a public employment be received to monastic vows. The subsequent repeal of this regulation has allowed, in our own day, a Menzikoff, of Crimean notoriety, to retire into a convent at Moscow.

The military career of Peter was marked with great reverses, yet while failing in a subordinate design, he triumphantly achieved his main object. A long

armistice concluded with the Turks in 1699, left him established upon the Sea of Azof, at liberty to draw off his forces from the south, to be employed in an attempt to gain access to the Baltic by attacking Sweden. Circumstances seemed to promise an auspicious issue to such a contest. Charles XII., who had recently ascended the Swedish throne, was only eighteen years of age; and had as yet displayed no capacity for business, or military predilections. On the other hand, the Kings of Denmark and Poland were as eager as the czar to avail themselves of his youth and inexperience to pillage his monarchy, and recover possessions lost in former wars. Sweden had wrested Sleswick and Holstein from Denmark; Livonia and Esthonia from Poland; and Ingria, at the eastern extremity of the Gulf of Finland, from Russia. The three states therefore formed an offensive alliance in order to apply by force of arms the principle of restitution to the Scandinavian power. But Peter, who recognized the right of the strong hand to conquer and retain, ludicrously gave prominence, in his declaration of war, to the indignity put upon him by the governor of Riga in not being allowed to see the citadel, and the high price which his ambassadors had been charged for provisions at that place during their travels. The confederates completely deceived themselves respecting their own means, the temper and capabilities of the youthful Charles. The untried prince suddenly be-

came a hero, and baffled the triumvirate. In little more than six weeks, he compelled the King of Denmark to conclude a peace at the gates of his own capital; and while his general obliged the Polish sovereign to retreat from Livonia, he crossed the Baltic with a small but highly disciplined army, marched over ice and snow to attack the Russians, and totally defeated them at Narva, November 30. 1700.

The battle of Narva was a contest between a small body of veteran well-accoutred Swedes, and a vast host of raw, undisciplined and ill-armed Russian militia. The czar, who was not present on the occasion, had deputed the command to the Duke de Croi, a foreigner, whose authority was disputed by the native officers; and this discordancy, together with a heavy fall of snow which the wind drove in the faces of his troops contributed to their discomfiture. He heard of the disaster with philosophic calmness. "I know very well," said he, "that the Swedes will have the advantage of us for a considerable time; but they will teach us at length to beat them." By redoubling his activity to repair losses, provide artillery, and profit by experience, he rendered defeat auxiliary to success, while his opponent, being betrayed into the error of despising him, converted his victory into a misfortune. Had the youthful conqueror at Narva properly followed up his triumph, he might have marched to Moscow,

and dealt with Russia as he had done with Denmark, dictating terms at the gates of the capital. But deeming this feasible at any time, in the spirit of over-confidence, he directed his sole attention to Poland; and thus lost the only opportunity that ever presented itself favourable to an invasion of the empire, while the czar was left at liberty to re-organise his army, and increase his means for offensive or defensive war. The battle of Pultowa, far more reversely fatal than the battle of Narva—Peter victorious in the issue, and Charles a fugitive in Turkey—were the results of this remarkable mistake.

In less than four years, the czar achieved wonders, and was master of the ground on which his troops had been signally worsted. He summoned his seamen from Azof and the Don; planted flotillas on the Lakes Peipus and Ladoga to clear them of the enemy, drove the Swedes from both banks of the Neva, founded St. Petersburg and Cronstadt; sailed on the gulf of Finland; and captured Narva and Dorpat. The city, intended to be a new capital, was commenced in May 1703; and within five months afterwards foreign commerce opened with the arrival of a Dutch vessel at the port. Never was the energy of an individual will, and the perfect callousness of a despot's heart, more remarkably exemplified than in its rise and progress. Nature seemed to forbid the erection of any handiwork of man upon the spot in the shape of a permanent

residence. The site was a morass in summer that quivered beneath the foot of the passenger, coated with snow in winter, over which the north wind freely poured its biting blasts and sleety tempests. The neighbourhood supplied not a single stone for building, except what was found in a Swedish fort, at some distance. So low was the ground, that a westerly gale submerged it by checking the current of the Neva. A silent evidence of danger from this cause existed in a solitary tree, on which was marked the height to which a great inundation rose in 1680. With his own hand, Peter cut down the tree, to remove an irksome witness out of sight. In addition to natural difficulties, the upper classes of his subjects remonstrated against establishing a capital on a barren marshy soil, in an inclement climate, where winter reigned for eight months in the year, rye was an article of garden culture, and a bee-hive a curiosity. But determined to connect himself directly with the Baltic, the czar persevered, reckless of the misery and death he inflicted upon the instruments of his will. Gangs of men were dragged from Astrachan, Kasan, the Ukraine, and the Ural, as well as from nearer sites—Tatars, Kalmucks, Cossacks, Russians, and Finns—who never saw their homes again. Whatever their previous calling and habits, whether accustomed to a sedentary life in the towns, or a roving one in the steppes, they had to work like slaves without pay at

the severest labour, carrying earth to raise the general level of the site, digging canals for drainage, and deepening the divergent branches of the river to keep down the floods. Thousands upon thousands perished owing to disease, toil, scanty fare, often amounting to absolute famine, and exposure to inclement elements. St. Petersburg may now be built of granite, but it rests upon a bed of human skeletons.

The rapid progress of Peter, though duly reported to Charles, excited not the lest concern in his mind; for having carried destruction through the fields of Poland and Saxony, he looked upon a march to Moscow as a kind of triumphal procession, after which it would be mere amusement to put the wooden houses on the Neva in a blaze. But the proud vision was relinquished soon after attempting to realise it; and on the fatal field of Pultowa, July 8. 1709, the czar was finally relieved from all fear of his antagonist, who lost his army, and with difficulty reached himself the Turkish frontier. This battle was one of the most decisive in the annals of the world, as well as important in its results. It not only saved Russia at the time from further invasion, but secured for the empire the eventual dominion of the Baltic, by crippling the military power and lowering the political influence of Sweden. Her best troops perished or were captives, while her king was an exile. Peter, with characteristic sagacity, instantly comprehended the full significance

of his success. "Now, by God's assistance," he wrote to Moscow, on the evening of the battle, "the foundation stone for the building of Petersburg is indeed completely laid." He had secured the safety of the city designed to become mistress of the adjoining waters, by crushing the adversary from whom alone the danger of molestation was to be apprehended. But the victory of the Russians was not gained by any positive superiority in bravery, discipline, or the skill of their commander, though he conducted himself like an able general, and showed great personal intrepidity. They were as three to one to the Swedes. The latter lost the day through the insane folly of their sovereign, who had led them on a Quixotic expedition into the Ukraine, in order to unite with Mazeppa, the rebellious hetman of the Don Cossacks, a chief who joined his standard, but could only induce a handful of his people to imitate the example. Far from supplies, and in a naturally desolate country, rendered more so by the activity of the enemy, the army was frightfully reduced in numbers by long marches, inclement weather, want of food and clothing; and fought to special disadvantage, as even the ordinary munitions of war were exhausted. With the exception of the king, and the few who escaped with him, the entire force which had been the terror of Europe, either fell on the field or subsequently surrendered. The Swedish prisoners were distributed over the wilds of Siberia,

where they earned a subsistence by keeping schools, and holding offices requiring intelligence in the mines, for there was scarcely a man among them who was not greatly in advance of the conquerors in general knowledge. Marshal Renschild, one of the number, after being nine years a prisoner of war, was exchanged for two Russian generals taken at the battle of Narva.

No event could be more opportune for the czar than the flight of Charles to the Turkish dominions, and his long residence of five years on the banks of the Dniester. He speedily took Riga, overrun the provinces of Livonia and Esthonia; and thus possessed the coast of the Baltic between the mouths of the Neva and the Dwina. But in 1711, he narrowly escaped forfeiting all the fruits of his crowning victory, and losing even his throne and liberty, by committing precisely the same military errors which had proved so fatal to the Swedish king. The latter succeeded, by the pressing representations of his agents, in inducing the Turkish government to declare war against Russia, though the chief motive to this step was not to aid the refugee, but to defeat the evident intentions of the czar to gain the sovereignty of the Black Sea, as expressed by the increase of his fleet at Azof, and the foundation of Taganrog. Charles had despised the Russians; Peter now despised the Turks. Charles, relying upon the Hetman of the Don Cossacks for supplies of men and provisions, separated himself from

his own resources, and penetrated into the Ukraine: Peter, depending upon the Hospodar of Moldavia for the same assistance, boldly marched from his own frontier, and advanced to the banks of the Pruth. Charles found the Hetman unable to perform his promises, and was hemmed in by an overwhelming number of Russians, while his troops were in the utmost distress for food and powder: Peter, equally disappointed in the Hospodar, was environed by an overpowering host of Turks and Tatars, with his army on the verge of famine, and his ammunition expended. But the czar's position on the Pruth was even more critical than the king's at Pultowa. Charles, though defeated, did effect his own escape; but to Peter, after a dreadful slaughter of his soldiers, escape was impossible, without the permission of the enemy, so completely was he surrounded. In this emergency, the stratagem of a bribe, administered to the grand-vizier, procured for him a cessation of arms; and on condition of surrendering his artillery, restoring Azof, demolishing Taganrog, thus relinquishing all pretension to the Black Sea, and giving hostages for the fulfilment of the treaty, he was allowed to disengage himself from the net in which he was entangled. It is a curious subject for speculation, what the destiny of Eastern and Northern Europe would have been, if Turkey, already in possession of Charles, had seized Peter, as assuredly she might have done, and kept the

two rival potentates under lock and key in the fortress of Rhodes.

To secure and extend his hold upon the Baltic, by the depression of Sweden, was henceforth the policy of Peter. The war continued for ten years longer, during which he made a second European tour, visiting Copenhagen, Hamburgh, Amsterdam, Paris, and Berlin. In the interval, his forces operated in northern Germany, ravaged the shores of Finland, took Abo, gained possession of the Aland archipelago, crossed the Gulf of Bothnia, and horribly desolated the country in the neighbourhood of Stockholm. To distress an enemy as much as possible,—to burn, slaughter, destroy, and commit every conceivable atrocity,—were legitimate vocations in time of war, in the view of the czar. He would not have understood the policy of the Anglo-French, at the present period, in sparing Odessa and Helsingfors, otherwise than as the height of weakness or treachery; and a Lyons or Dundas, guilty of such criminal forbearance in his navy, would have been unceremoniously strung up at the mast-head as cowardly or traitorous. Admiral Apraxin, in one of the campaigns, demolished 6 considerable towns, 11 stone palaces, 109 seats of nobles, 826 farms, 3 mills, and 10 magazines, with 2 copper, and 5 iron forges. Major-general Lacy laid waste 2 towns, 21 noble seats, 535 hamlets and farms, 40 mills, 16 magazines, and 9 iron-works. The destruction of corn and forage, the

slaughter of cattle and horses, the burning of the woods, and the breaking down of the mounds that preserved the mines from inundation, to render their ruin irretrievable, deprived thousands of the Swedish peasantry of their only means of subsistence, and reduced them to the extremest misery and want. By means of such "plenipotentiaries," as the soldiers and sailors who committed these shocking excesses were jocularly styled by their master, he obtained the peace of Nystadt, September 10. 1721, by which Sweden ceded to Russia the provinces of Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, part of Carelia, the territory of Viborg, and all the islands along their shores. The frontier between Swedish and Russian Finland was fixed at the Kymen river. Grand festivities in the capital and throughout the empire for fifteen days, were celebrated in honour of this event; and the senate and synod formally requested the conqueror to accept the style of Peter the Great, Emperor of all the Russias, and Father of his country. Impartial posterity has not ratified his claim to the first and last of these titles.

Though the peace of the Pruth had been gladly accepted as an act of grace, in order to escape from the clutches of the Turks, it was with sullen rage that the czar executed its conditions, retiring from the neighbourhood of the Black Sea, breaking up his foundations at Azof, and withdrawing his fleet to Voronetz, on the Don, where it was comparatively useless. Ex-

cluded from a coast in the south, and having mastered one in the west, he turned his attention to the south-east, and sought the empire of the Caspian, with a view to the commerce with Persia and Central Asia, which the adventurous English merchants had vainly endeavoured to establish. There was a pretext for interference in that quarter. The Lesghians, one of the wild tribes of the Caucasus, had invaded Shirvan, pillaged the principal towns, and massacred the inhabitants, among whom were 300 Russians, the agents of some Moscow merchants, who lost a large amount of property. Peter demanded redress from the shah; but the latter, being in the greatest distress from the inroads of the Afghans, supplicated the czar to make reprisals himself, and also to aid him against his enemies. Promptly accepting the invitation, he descended the Volga with a powerful army in 1722, and embarked upon the Caspian, landing his troops on the coast of Daghistan, under the shadow of the Caucasus. John Bell, of Antermony, proverbially known as the most faithful of travellers, and Henry Bruce, a military officer, accompanied the expedition. Peter reached Derbent, the keys of which were laid at his feet by the governor; but his soldiers suffered so grievously on the march from the intolerable heat, that many of them dropped in the ranks. Wearing a dimity waistcoat, a white nightcap, with a plain flapped hat over it, he shared their fatigues, and trudged at their head, occa-

sionally mounting an English pony. The ill-considered enterprise was inglorious. But in the following year, the provinces of Daghistan, Shirvan, Ghilan, Mazanderan, and Asterabad, on the entire western and southern shores of the Caspian, were ceded to the czar, on condition of sending assistance against the Afghans. Ismael Bey, the Persian ambassador, who negociated the treaty, addressed him, at a public audience, in true oriental style:—"Thou, who art blessed with the mercy of God, and the protection of angels!—thou, who surpassest Darius and Alexander the Great in glory, Nucharavanus and Pheridumi in clemency, and Kiavanum in courage!—thou art the true fortunate star Merrick!" (Jupiter?) The provinces were occupied, though the promised assistance was never sent; but they were relinquished by the Empress Anne, in return for some commercial advantages.

This was the last of Peter's military operations. He suffered much during the campaign from an inward disease, but kept his condition secret, till compelled by intensity of pain to reveal it. Though relieved from time to time by surgical skill, his habits of restlessness and intemperance renewed the malady with greater virulence and heightened agony, till his strong constitution completely succumbed. The struggle was long and violent. As the end approached, he became almost constantly delirious. But in the fallacious calm of nature which often precedes dissolution, his mind

rallied, and he endeavoured to leave a written record of his wishes. An almost strengthless hand could only scrawl, "Let everything be given to ——;" and no one knew who was intended. His eyes closed for ever at St. Petersburgh, on the 28th of January, 1725, about four o'clock in the morning, after a life of fifty-two years, and a reign of forty-three, among the most remarkable in history.

In his personal habits, the first emperor of all the Russias was a boor of the lowest grade. To him a drinking, swearing, smoking Dutch skipper was the beau-ideal of a gentleman. With one of that class he was instantly "hail, fellow, well met," while quite a match for any of them in discussing beer and brandy, handling a clay-pipe, and vociferating blasphemies. In his usual appearance he was not to be distinguished from a shopkeeper, or artisan, so plain, even coarse, was his attire. "On all the solemn festivals," says a diplomatist, "he only wore the uniform of his preobajenskoi regiment of guards. I saw him in 1721 give a public audience to the ambassadors of Persia. He entered the hall of audience in nothing more than a surtout of coarse brown cloth. When he was seated on the throne, the attendants brought him a coat of blue gros-de-Naples, embroidered with silver, which he put on with great precipitation, because the ambassadors were waiting for admittance. During this time he turned his eyes towards the window where the

czarina had placed herself to observe the ceremony. Catherine was heard repeatedly to burst out into fits of laughter, as the czar seemed to her to be astonished at seeing himself so finely dressed; and the czar laughed at it himself, as also did all the spectators. As soon as the ambassadors were gone, Peter threw off his embroidered coat and put on his surtout." Detesting ceremony, foreign ministers were commonly received at any time or place. An Austrian envoy had his first audience at five o'clock in the morning. A Prussian delivered his credentials on board a ship, standing on the deck, while the czar, at the main-top, bawled out to the diplomatist to come aloft. He rose at four o'clock; was at business in the senate or at the admiralty by six; dined at one; and slept an hour after dinner, using for a couch the deck of a vessel, the floor of a hut, or the bare ground, with occasionally some straw, when away from the capital. Dinners at court were odd and uproarious entertainments. Shipwrights and carpenters sat next the sovereign. Senators, ministers, generals, and priests formed the outer circle, many of whom were obliged to stand, as the guests invited were two to one of the chairs provided. However numerous the dishes, there was only a single plate for each person, which its owner cleansed with his finger, or wiped with the tablecloth, if cleansing was thought necessary. Before the dinner was half over, the company often took to hallooing at the very

top of the voice, being fuddled with adulterated Tokay and other vitiated wines. This diversion of the visitors was most approved by the host, if fighting was grafted upon shouting, and they exchanged bloody evidences of pugilism.

His subjects might be princes, ministers, senators, generals, and governors, but they were as much slaves in relation to the sovereign as the serfs with reference to their lords. He freely vented his displeasure upon the highest officials, reproving negligence with cuffs, kicks, and thumps; laid his stick about their backs, or used the first rope end within reach as a scourge. Menzikoff was caned for dancing in a ball room while wearing his sword; and the whole senate got a thrashing for being behind time, with the exception of the older members. Neither party deemed this corporal punishment any indignity. But imperious as Peter was, and terrible in his wrath, he might be opposed with impunity, and calmed in passion, when in the wrong, by the bold utterance of truth, and a frank appeal to his reason. In a fit of anger, when sailing in a boat, he seized one of his companions, a senator, and was about to throw him overboard. "You may drown me," said the senator, "but your history will tell of this." Struck with the justice of the remark, he at once desisted. Dolgorouki had the temerity in full senate, when the czar was absent, to suspend the execution of an objectionable ukase. Carrying it

away with him, he went to the next church to receive the sacrament, which the priest was then administering. Upon hearing of the offence, Peter hurried to the senate, and ordered the instant attendance of the offender. The latter, on receiving the message, merely remarked, "I hear you," and went on with his devotions. A second message only elicited the reply, "I give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." When the service was over, he repaired to his master, who drew his sword, and rushed furiously at him, saying, "You shall perish!" "Strike!" replied Dolgorouki, calm and firm, pointing to his heart; "I do not fear to die in a just cause." Peter hesitated and stepped back. "Tell me," said he, "what could have made you so daring?" "Yourself," responded the minister; "did not you order that the truth should be told you with respect to the interest of your people?" Explanation followed relative to the ukase, which so satisfied the czar of its mischievous tendency, that he commended the courage of the official, and apologised for his own violence.

Comedy followed close upon the heels of tragedy in the rule of Peter, ridiculous farces alternating with savage executions. In mockery of the western popedom, and the defunct patriarchate of his own empire, he appointed a *kniaz papa*, or prince-pope, with a salary and a residence in the Tatar quarter of the capital.

The person chosen was a notoriously sottish old man, a kind of court fool, who was inaugurated by buffoons, and drawn through the streets by oxen, seated upon a cask of brandy. A rabble attended, clattering pots and pans, blowing horns and trumpets discordantly, with a number of men in the habit of monks, each carrying a bottle and glass. The czar, in the attire of a Dutch skipper, and his courtiers in grotesque disguises, joined the procession; and celebrated a carnival for three days and nights, indulging in excesses too abominable to be described. A second mock ecclesiastical potentate was nominated upon the death of the first, a man of eighty-four, who was publicly married to his widow. The invitations on the occasion were verbally delivered by persons who stuttered; the immediate attendants of the bridal party were all lame; and the most corpulent fellows that could be found were chosen for footmen and waiters. Four bears, roaring lustily, being goaded by the people, drew the couple to church, where the ceremony was performed by a blind priest wearing spectacles. Exhibitions of this kind illustrate the depraved tastes of their designer, his utter ignorance of the essential principles of civilisation, and incapacity to act the part of the true father of his country.

In addition to the domestic reforms and labours of Peter, previously mentioned, he instituted a regular police, a board of trade, a college of mines, an imperial

library and cabinet of medals, an observatory, botanical garden, and gallery of paintings, schools of anatomy and medicine with corresponding collections, almshouses and hospitals; designed the academy of sciences, encouraged numerous manufactures, gave uniformity to weights and measures, introduced the lighting of towns, patronised printing, and translated himself some works on mechanics. His genius contemplated vast undertakings without overlooking minute details. He created a navy, and imported Dutch cats to keep down rats and mice in the ships. He founded a capital, and sent from abroad the model of a coffin to its inhabitants. He conquered a sea-board, and brought foreign butter-women, brush and basket-makers, to its shores. But in all his designs, he had an eye exclusively to material interests. While the fleets, dockyards, and arsenals of England and Holland excited unbounded admiration, he seems not to have bestowed a moment's thought upon their free institutions, trial by jury, and the great principles of their government. With a personal assiduity unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled, by any example in ancient or modern times, he sought the secular aggrandisement of the state; but never grasping the idea, that moral culture is the high road to individual eminence and national dignity, he altogether forbore the attempt to elevate and purify the character of the people. Totally misconceiving the nature of civilisation, he not only

laboured to produce its results without employing its machinery, but was in constant antagonism to its essential principles, both by his own personal vices, the brutal discipline and barbarous severities of his government, and the disgusting orgies he provided for the populace. Even in material progress, he committed the capital error of supposing that by the exercise of imperial will he could anticipate the gradual work of time, compel his subjects suddenly to forego the prejudices of ages, and enforce by ukases the cultivation of those arts and sciences which in other countries have ever been of slow and spontaneous growth. We may admit that he conferred advantages upon his country, numerous and positive; but his plan of national reform, ill-conceived and wrongly prosecuted, was a grand failure. The millions of the empire remained under him, and after him, true Muscovites, ignorant and brutish; and had merely been brought into contact with traces of an imported civilisation which they could not appreciate, or absolutely abhorred.

While extending his dominions and consolidating his power, Peter strove to render his territory convenient for commerce and intercommunication by turning its mighty rivers and lakes to account, uniting them by canals, and thus associating distant seas—a policy contemplated by some of his predecessors, and strenuously pursued by his successors. To the latter he also left

an example of aggression in the direction of Turkey, and of intermeddling with the general affairs of Europe, which they have faithfully imitated. There is a singular document extant, purporting to be his political testament, containing rules to be observed by the Russian sovereigns with reference to the aggrandisement of the empire. It is said to have been transmitted to Louis XV., in 1757, by the notorious Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont, who went to St. Petersburgh in the disguise of a woman, as a French spy, and was upon intimate terms with the Empress Elizabeth. Though doubts have been thrown upon the integrity of this document, no positive evidence has been advanced against its authenticity. Being a century old, and faithfully reflecting the high aspirings of its presumed author, while embodying principles of action which have been notoriously adopted by Russia, the so-called will of Peter deserves attention. The following are the salient points:—

"1. The Russian nation must be constantly on a war footing to keep the soldiers warlike and in good condition.

"2. No opportunity must be lost of taking part in the affairs and disputes of Europe, especially in those of Germany.

"3. Poland must be divided, by keeping up constant jealousies and confusion there. The authorities must be gained over with money, and the assemblies cor-

rupted so as to influence the election of the kings. "We must get up a party of our own there, send Russian troops into the country, and let them sojourn there so long that they may ultimately find some pretext for remaining there for ever. Should the neighbouring states make difficulties, we must appease them for the moment, by allowing them a share of the territory, until we can safely resume what we have thus given away.

"4. We must take away as much territory as possible from Sweden, and contrive that they shall attack us first, so as to give us a pretext for their subjugation.

"5. The consorts of the Russian princes must always be chosen from among the German princesses, in order to multiply our family alliances with the Germans, and to unite our interests with theirs.

"6. We must keep steadily extending our frontiers northward along the Baltic, and southward along the shores of the Black Sea.

"7. We must progress as much as possible in the direction of Constantinople and India. He who can once get possession of these points is the real ruler of the world. With this view we must provoke constant quarrels—at one time with Turkey, and at another with Persia.

"8. Moreover, we must take pains to establish and maintain an intimate union with Austria, apparently

countenancing her schemes for future aggrandisement in Germany, and all the while secretly rousing the jealousy of the minor states against her.

"9. We must make the house of Austria interested in the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, and we must neutralise its jealousy at the capture of Constantinople, either by preoccupying it with a war with the old European states, or by allowing it a share of the spoil, which we can afterwards resume at our leisure.

"10. We must collect around our house, as round a centre, all the detached sections of Greeks which are scattered abroad in Hungary, Turkey, and South Poland; we must make them look to us for support, and thus, by establishing beforehand a sort of ecclesiastical supremacy, we shall pave the way for universal sovereignty.

"11. When Sweden is ours, Persia vanquished, Poland subjugated, Turkey conquered—when our armies are united, and the Euxine and the Baltic in the possession of our ships, then we must make separate and secret overtures, first to the court of Versailles, and then to that of Vienna, to share with them the dominion of the world.

"12. Should the improbable case happen of both rejecting the propositions of Russia, then our policy will be to set one against the other, and make them tear each other to pieces. Russia must then watch for and seize the favourable moment, and pour her already

assembled hosts into Germany; while two immense fleets, laden with Asiatic hordes, and convoyed by the armed squadrons of the Euxine and the Baltic, set sail simultaneously from the Sea of Azof and the harbour of Archangel.

"Sweeping along the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, they will overrun France on the one side, while Germany is overpowered on the other. When these countries are fully conquered, the rest of Europe must fall easily, and without a struggle, under our yoke. Thus Europe can and must be subjugated."

Bomarsund, incipiently grim, founded in an obscure archipelago of the Baltic, in the reign of Nicholas; and Sebastopol, crammed with cannon and ball, were adapted and designed to carry out this policy.

The relations between England and Russia, during the reign, though never actually hostile, were more than once disturbed, and on the eve of an open rupture. Though Peter did not commit himself to the abortive scheme concerted by Alberoni and Gortz, one object of which was the dethronement of George I., and the substitution of the Pretender, he was certainly acquainted with all its details; and an English fleet appeared in the Baltic, towards the close of the great contest between Sweden and Russia, intended simply as a demonstration in favour of the former power, without proceeding to the extremity of war with the latter.

But the most curious altercation between the two countries occurred in 1708, and extended over a twelvemonth. It was occasioned by the arrest of Matveof, the Russian ambassador, in London, for a debt of fifty pounds, due to a mercer in Covent Garden, and some other tradesmen. The hungry creditors, after trying the dunning process in vain, suspected their defaulting customer of a design to leave the country without discharging his obligations, and put the agents of the law upon his track. His excellency was accordingly captured "in the street called Charles Street," and consigned to durance vile in a sponging-house till security for payment was obtained. "The matter," says he, in a formal letter of complaint, "speaks for itself; and I shall only say that the bailiff had the rashness to arrest me in my coach, and to carry me prisoner to the Black Raven, a scandalous house, without notifying to me the reason; and to abuse me by thrusting himself into my coach and seizing on my person, after having taken away my sword, hat, and cane." Though the ambassador may be supposed to make the worst of the case, it is well known that sheriffs' officers were most unceremonious at that time in the execution of their duties. Considering himself, by the law of nations, a privileged person, he applied for redress, and demanded the corporal punishment of the offenders. But Mr. Secretary Boyle, on the part of Queen Anne and the

government, while deploring the "dismal affair," "extraordinary affront," and "enormous procedure," could only promise proceedings according to law; and he was well aware that no punishment could be inflicted, as the English statute book then contained no enactment providing for the protection of ambassadors from the inconvenient civil process.

This was poor satisfaction for Matveof, accustomed to see his master decapitate and knout without judge or jury. He quitted the country, and referred the prosecution of the affair to the czar, who speedily made a demand in form for satisfaction for the insult offered to himself in the person of his representative. Finding it necessary to act, the government instituted a prosecution against the mercer, the attorney, and the bailiffs, with their assistants, in the court of Queen's Bench; but as Lord Chief Justice Holt, and the other judges, finally ruled that no offence known to the English law had been committed, the parties were acquitted. Upon this decision, the act of parliament was passed exempting ambassadors from arrest for debt; and Whitworth was despatched as ambassador extraordinary to Moscow to offer explanations. In his speech at a public audience, the envoy bamboozled the czar, telling him that the delinquents had been "declared infamous with the unanimous consent of the whole nation;" and having read an apologetic letter from the queen respecting the "indignation of all our

subjects on this occasion," their "just horror against this violent insult," Peter declared himself satisfied. Notwithstanding this terrible character, Morton, the mercer, had none the less customers at his shop in Covent Garden; Benson, the attorney, did not lose his practice; and the bailiffs continued to ply their vocation, only eschewing the diplomatic body.

CHAP. X.

TRAGEDY OF THE CZAREVITCH ALEXIS.

CHARACTER OF THE PRINCE. — HIS MARRIAGE. — REMONSTRANCE OF PETER. — FLIGHT OF ALEXIS. — PROMISE OF THE CZAR. — RETURN OF THE PRINCE. — ACT OF DISINHERITANCE. — ACT OF RENUNCIATION. — PERFIDY OF PETER. — EXECUTIONS AT MOSCOW. — EXAMINATION OF THE PRINCE. — HIS TRIAL. — CLERICAL DOCUMENT. — SENTENCE OF THE COURT. — DEATH OF ALEXIS. — LETTER OF THE CZAR. — BRUCE'S NARRATIVE.

THE laws of Russia invest the sovereign with the right of displacing from the succession the legitimate heir, and tacitly extend his prerogative to the summary removal from life of any member of the imperial family, while perfectly irresponsible himself for the action. This tremendous power was actually exercised by Peter, who was the same violent despot and inexorable judge in domestic as in national rule, though, unwilling to bear the odium of the deed alone, he took counsel with his slaves, and obtained their sanction to it. It is singular that, on the two occasions when he gave the most appalling evidence of the vileness of his nature, he had just been visiting the civilised countries of the west. From his first tour, he returned to riot in the blood of the Strelitz; and from

the second, in 1717, to dog the czarevitch to the death. Peter, by his first wife, Eudokhia, whom he repudiated, was the unworthy father of a profligate son, Alexis. The aversion with which he regarded the mother seems to have diminished his affection for the child, while his own vast labours left him little leisure to bestow any personal attention upon the prince. Committed to the care of priests and women, who belonged to the old Muscovite faction, the boy was taught to detest foreigners, reverence ancient usages, and regard innovations as heresies and crimes. Upon tendencies of this kind becoming apparent, he was placed under preceptors of the new school. But first impressions proved the strongest, and he grew up a passive foe to his father's policy. Alexis was the hope of the Russian conservatives, as, from his known predilections, they anticipated the entire abolition of the new institutions, the banishment of foreigners, and even the destruction of St. Petersburg, upon his coming to the government. In addition to this fatal difference between sire and son, the prince was indolent, disliked the military profession, and his priestly guides being men of dissolute manners, he contracted the habit of disgusting drunkenness.

In the hope of reclaiming the heir-apparent, the czar married him to a princess of the house of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttel, young and beautiful. But this connection had no effect upon the czarevitch; and after

giving birth to a son, who received the name of his grandfather, Peter, and afterwards reigned, the misery consequent upon an unhappy alliance brought her to the grave. Alexis had previously attached himself to Euphrosina, a woman of mean extraction and Finnish origin, by whom he had a family, and continued to indulge his idle and sottish propensities. Thus, if he succeeded to the throne, Peter had to look forward to his own career being rendered nugatory in the annals of his country; Russia, after all his toils, reverting to the state in which he found it. Though this was confessedly a trying position, it does not palliate the abominable measures he took to overcome the difficulty. Immediately after the death of his wife, Alexis received a letter of remonstrance from his father, in which he observed, upon the presumption that he did not amend his ways:—"Be assured that I will deprive you of the succession, and cut you off as an unprofitable member. Do not think that, because I have no other child, I say this only with a design to frighten you. I will certainly do what I say, if it shall so please God; for as I spare not myself for the good of my country, and the safety of my friends, why should I spare you who will not be at the pains to be worthy of them? I shall rather choose to transmit them into the hands of a worthy stranger, than give them to an unworthy son." A few days after this despatch, a son was born to Peter by his consort

Catherine; but though subsequently nominated to the crown, the prince did not survive his childhood. To the above appeal, the czarevitch, who would have been content in the meanest hovel in Moscow, with a sufficient allowance of brandy, and a mistress, responded: —"If it is your Majesty's pleasure to deprive me of the succession to the crown of Russia, by reason of my inability, your will be done. I even earnestly request it at your hands—nor will I ever afterwards lay claim to the succession, as I call God to witness by a solemn oath."

His father addressed him a second time. "I observe," says he, "that all you speak of in the letter is the succession, as if I stood in need of your consent. I have represented to you what grief your behaviour has given me for so many years, and not a word do you say of it; the exhortations of a father make no impression on you. I have brought myself to write to you once more, but for the last time. If you despise my counsels now I am living, what regard will be paid to them after my death? Though you may now mean not to violate your promises, yet those *bushy beards* (the priests) will be able to wind you as they please, and force you to break your word. It is you those people rely on. You have no gratitude to him who gave you life. Since you have been of proper age, did you ever assist him in his labours? Do you not find fault with, do you not detest, everything I do for the

good of my people? I have all the reason in the world to believe that, if you survive me, you will overthrow all that I have been doing. Amend, make yourself worthy of the succession, or turn monk. Let me have your answer either in writing, or personally, or I will deal with you as a malefactor." The prince returned a curt reply, to the effect that he wished to become a monk, and requested permission to take that step.

The relations between the father and the son were in this state when, in February 1716, Peter set out upon his travels to Germany and France. Before his departure, he had an interview with Alexis, and gave him six months for deliberation, at the close of which he was finally to decide between suitable training for the throne and the life of a convent. It is clear from the fact of the czar quitting his dominions, leaving his headstrong son behind, that he had no apprehensions of conspiracy from him.

Upon the six months expiring, the czar, who was then at Copenhagen, wrote to the czarevitch for his determination. If he decided upon making himself worthy of the succession, he was to join him as soon as possible; or if he preferred entering a convent, he was to fix a time for the execution of the purpose. On receiving this letter, which called for an immediate reply, Alexis consulted his evil counsellors. They represented that it would be dangerous for him to put himself into the hands of his father, at a distance from

all his friends, and suggested a deceptive course, which was unfortunately adopted. Having announced his intention to go to Copenhagen, and got money from the senate to defray the expenses of the journey, he turned off from the route thither on the borders of Livonia; and hastening to Vienna, threw himself upon the protection of Charles VI., intending to remain at his court till the death of the czar. But though received with kindness, it was not convenient to the emperor, as an ally of his father, to allow of his residence in the capital; and he removed to Naples, then belonging to Charles, where he took up his abode with Euphrosina in the castle of St. Elmo. The place of his retreat was speedily discovered by the agents of Peter. Upon which, he sent Romanzof, a captain of the guards, and Tolstoi, a privy councillor, with a letter to Alexis, in his own handwriting, dated from Spa, July 21. 1717. It contained the following passage:—"I now write to you, and for the last time, to let you know that you had best comply with my will, which Tolstoi and Romanzof will make known to you. *On your obedience, I assure you, and promise before God, that I will not punish you; so far from it, that if you return, I will love you better than ever.* But if you do not, by virtue of the power I have received from God as your father, I pronounce against you my eternal curse; and as your sovereign, I assure you I shall find ways to punish you, in which I hope, as my cause is

just, God will take it in hand, and assist me in revenging it." This distinct declaration, together with the representations of the messengers, and the advice of the German emperor, changed the purpose of the fugitive; and reflection also seems to have made him sensible of his errors, for he replied to the letter (October 4.) as follows:—

"Most clement Lord and Father.

"I have received your Majesty's most gracious letter by Messieurs Tolstoi and Romanzof, in which, as well as by word of mouth, I am most graciously assured of pardon, for having fled without your permission, in case I return. I give you most hearty thanks with tears in my eyes, and own myself unworthy of all favour. I throw myself at your feet, and implore your clemency, and beseech you to pardon my crimes, who have deserved all kind of punishment. But I rely upon your gracious assurances; and submitting to your pleasure, shall set out immediately from Naples, to attend your Majesty at Petersburg, with those whom you have sent.

"Your most humble and unworthy servant, who deserves not to be called your son,

"ALEXIS."

The prince, in accordance with this avowal, removed to Russia. Did Peter welcome and cultivate the repentant disposition he exhibited? Did the father order

the fatted calf to be killed, in honour of the prodigal's return, broken in spirit and contrite? Was he even faithful to his sworn engagement? No!—but within twenty-four hours after the czarevitch entered Moscow, the conduct of the czar showed that he had deliberately decoyed him into the empire with a falsehood, in order to destroy him as a victim.

Alexis reached Moscow on the 13th of February, 1718, and had a private conference with his father the same day. It was generally believed by the people that a full reconciliation had taken place; but they were quickly undeceived. Before dawn, the next morning, the great bell was tolled; the regiments of guards and garrison of the city were under arms; the bishops, archimandrites, and other clergy assembled in the cathedral; the ministers, privy councillors, and members of the senate were summoned to the castle; and the prince was brought into the great hall, without his sword, as a prisoner of state. Peter retired with him to an adjoining apartment; but what passed therein is conjecture only. Probably he disclosed the names of the principal parties privy to his flight; or who had agreed with him in holding opinions hostile to the new order of things, for couriers were immediately despatched to St. Petersburg and other places to order arrests. On returning to the council-chamber, the betrayed Alexis had to listen to the reading of an instrument which formally disinherited him. It con-

tained a tediously minute detail of his offences from childhood, specifying, among other articles, his violation of conjugal faith in taking a mistress while his wife was living — a debauchery which fell incomparably short of that in which his father rioted. Another charge was, his telling the German emperor that his life was not safe if he returned to Russia — a fear which the event very speedily justified.

"Accordingly," continued the document, "by our paternal power, in virtue of which, according to the laws of our empire, every private subject of ours can at pleasure disinherit a son, and pursuant to our prerogative as sovereign, and in regard to the welfare of our dominions, we for ever deprive our said son Alexis of the right of succeeding after us to the throne of Russia, on account of his crimes and unworthiness — even though not a single person of our family should exist at the time of our decease.

"And we constitute, appoint, and declare, in the want of a more aged successor, our second son, Peter, young as he is, successor to the said throne after us.

"Accursed be our above-mentioned son Alexis, if ever, at any time, he shall claim the said succession, or go about to procure it. — Done at Moscow, February 14th, 1718. Signed with our hand, and sealed with our seal."

An act of renunciation on the part of the prince was next read. "I, the undersigned, declare before the

Holy Evangelists, that I acknowledge and avow this exclusion to be just, as having deserved it by my crimes and unworthiness; and I bind myself and swear, in the name of the Sacred and Almighty Trinity, to submit myself wholly to this my father's will; never to seek after this succession, never to lay claim to it, never to accept it, under any pretence whatever; and I acknowledge as lawful successor my brother, the czarevitch Peter, on which I kiss the holy cross, and sign these presents with my own hand—Alexis." All the officers of state were then sworn to maintain the acts of disinheritance and renunciation, upon which the czar proceeded to the cathedral, where the two instruments were again read, and the oath of obedience administered to the clergy. The next year, King Death laid his hand upon the boy, prince Peter, and overthrew the appointed order of succession.

The legal right of the czar to disinherit his son is unquestionable, nor was any act of renunciation necessary to render the measure valid. In itself also, the step may be deemed prudent, considering the antecedents of the prince, and the policy he was likely to pursue if ever he came to the throne; but the conduct of Peter becomes execrably perfidious, viewed in connection with the pledge so solemnly given to forgive the past, and to love him better than before, on the faith of which he returned to Russia. Alexis had committed no new offence to justify a revocation of the

promise, but had submitted to the paternal will in a manner that ought to have rendered the promise more binding. His disinheritance, so formally conducted, and so rapidly following his return, clearly intimates, that the czar was carrying into effect a long preconcerted plan; and that when he proffered mercy to the delinquent, it was an engagement never meant to be fulfilled, but intended simply to serve the purpose of a delusion and a snare. As a further and worse infringement of the pledge, the hapless czarevitch was conveyed from the scene of his public humiliation to a prison; and Tolstoi, one of the basest minions of the court, with other myrmidons of tyranny, was alone allowed to have access to him. This was with the view of extracting from his naturally feeble, and now confused and distracted mind, admissions implicating others, and criminating himself. Scarcely had a month elapsed, before a horrible scaffold was erected in the great square of Moscow. The lifeless bodies of more than fifty priests and laymen were suspended around it. Four heads were at the four corners, one of which belonged to the bishop of Rostoff, who had been broken on the wheel, and his body burnt. In the centre Gleboff was impaled, a known lover of the repudiated Eudokhia, the mother of Alexis. It is said that the restless ferocity of Peter led him to ascend the scaffold, to interrogate afresh the victim in his last agonies, and that on approaching Gleboff, the latter spat in his face.

Even the capital itself was converted into a prison. None were allowed to leave it under pain of death, while the scrutiny lasted respecting the names and numbers of the disaffected. But beyond the bare circumstance of the elopement, no overt act or digested project of conspiracy was ever proved; and men were horribly butchered for the confidential expression of sentiments which were never resolved into action.

The civil death of Alexis was far from fulfilling the whole design of Peter, for had that been his entire object, it might have been accomplished without decoying him back to Russia. His real death was intended, and deemed a political necessity; for if the son survived the father, whether in or out of the empire, the old Muscovite party might rally in sufficient strength to place him on the throne, while his own renunciation of the crown would be considered null, as having been executed under durance. In effecting this infernal purpose, the czarevitch was dragged from the prisons of Moscow to those of St. Petersburg, and worried day and night with inquisitors, endeavouring to wring from him criminal admissions, in order to furnish a pretext for a capital sentence to be formally pronounced by the officers of state. There was no absolute necessity for any such judicial process, as the laws of the empire armed the czar with power to decide upon the fate of his son. But he wished to justify himself in the eye of the world and of posterity; and, perhaps, thought

of living in history as having offered an example of the sternness of Roman virtue, rending asunder the ties of nature and of blood for the salvation of his country. For four months the mind of the prince was kept upon the rack, and subjected to a species of mental torture, till his judgment, fortitude, and reason almost left him. As if weary of life, he seemed eager to make himself appear guilty; frankly avowed the secret sentiments of his heart, which he was not of course bound to reveal; and, in the confusion of his thoughts, he made statements, to render himself more culpable, which were untrue. Among the questions submitted to him in writing by the czar for an answer, there was the following: "When you saw, by Bayer's letter, that there was a revolt in the Mecklenburg army you were glad: I apprehend you had some view, and that you would have declared for the rebels even in my lifetime?" In civilised countries, a question of this kind would not be allowed to be put in a court of judicature, or, if put, the judge would immediately inform the prisoner that he need not answer it. But Alexis returned the written reply: "Had the rebels invited me in your lifetime, I should probably have joined them, had they been strong enough." However remarkable his infatuation in making this avowal, it is not less extraordinary that he should be held criminal for conduct which might possibly have been adopted under circumstances that never occurred.

Having collected what was considered a sufficient

body of evidence against the prince, but which really amounted to little more than admissions exacted by fear, if not by actual torture, Peter summoned his ministers, senators, and officers, with a number of the higher clergy, to decide upon the case. He took upon himself the office of public accuser, and opened the court with a speech, in which he detailed with painful minuteness his charges against the czarevitch, the follies of his youth, the vices of his riper years, and his political delinquencies. "Though," said he, in conclusion, "by all Divine and human laws, and especially by those of Russia, which exclude all interposition of the civil power between father and son, even among private persons, we have a sufficient and absolute power of sentencing our son, according to his crimes and our will, without consulting any one; yet men not being so clear-sighted in their own affairs as in those of others, and the most skilful physicians, instead of prescribing for themselves, have recourse to others, when sick; so, fearing lest I should bring some sin on my conscience, I state my case to you, and require a remedy." Peter knew his men, and the slaves comprehended their master. It was safe for him to add:— "Let it give you no uneasiness that you have to try your sovereign's son; but, without any respect of persons, do justice, and destroy not your souls and mine. Lastly, let not our conscience have anything to reproach us with on the terrible day of judgment, and

let not our country be hurt." Alexis appeared in person; but the wild and riotous czarevitch of former days was scarcely to be recognised, so altered was his appearance. His face was pale and haggard from confinement and persecution, his tall frame was bowed down, and his once powerful voice was reduced to a whisper. The court sat from June 25th to July 6th.

The clergy first delivered a written declaration upon the subject, in which, like cautious ecclesiastics, they refrained from committing themselves either to the side of severity or mercy. In this curious document, passages of Scripture thought to bear upon the case are quoted, as "Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land;" "Thou shalt not curse the ruler of thy people;" "He that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death;" "The eye that mocketh at his father, and that despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out," &c. Then follows the canon of a provincial council — "If any children run away from their orthodox fathers and mothers, and pay not the respect due to their fathers and mothers, and fancy to better their condition, let them be accursed," — with an extract from one of Chrysostom's homilies. "We," say the clergy, "submit all this to the most high consideration of his Imperial Majesty, with all due obedience, that he may do that which is agreeable in his own eyes. If he is inclined to punish the delin-

quent, according to his actions and the measure of his guilt, he has before him examples from the Old Testament; if he be inclined to spare, he has the pattern of Christ himself, kindly receiving the penitent prodigal, dismissing the woman taken in adultery, who, by the law, was to be stoned; and delighting in mercy more than sacrifice. He has the example of David, who is solicitous for the safety of Absalom his son, though an open rebel, recommending him to the commanders of his army, who insisted on giving him battle — 'Spare my son Absalom.' The father was for showing him mercy, but *Divine justice did not spare him.* The heart of the czar is in the hand of God: let him choose that to which God shall incline him." This equivocal paper was signed by Stephen, metropolitan of Rezan, two other archbishops, five bishops, four archimandrites, and two professors.

The lay judges, after stating that they had no rightful cognizance of the case, which depended solely upon the will of the czar, whose power was derived from God alone, and was not limited by any law, proceeded to deliver sentence, in obedience to the imperial ordinance. "The persons under-written, having consulted together, have unanimously agreed, without contradiction, and declared that the czarevitch, Alexis Petrovitz, is worthy of death, for his aforesaid crimes and capital transgressions against his sovereign and father, he being the son and subject of his czarian

majesty. We submit," they added, "this sentence we now give, and the condemnation we at present make, to the sovereign power, will, and merciful review of his czarian majesty, our most merciful monarch." One hundred and twenty-six persons appended their names to this document. The first was Alexander Menzikoff.

After hearing his sentence read, the prince was removed from the court on the evening of July 6. to the fortress of St. Petersburg; and in that fortress, about twenty-four hours afterwards, he expired. According to the official account of the event, he sank under the malady which fear and agony of mind induced. Early on the morning of the 7th messengers came to the czar to report the illness of his son, and his desire to see him. He went accordingly, with several officers of the court, among whom were some foreigners, both Scotch and Germans. He took an affectionate leave; but, the illness of the prince increasing, he was sent for again in the evening, and was on the point of crossing the Neva to the fortress when he was stopped by intelligence of his death. "While," says Peter, in a circular sent to his ministers abroad, to prevent false reports, "we were debating in our mind between the natural motions of paternal clemency on one side, and the regard we ought to pay to the preservation and the future security of our kingdom on the other; and pondering on what resolution to take, in an affair of so great difficulty and importance, it pleased the Almighty

God, by his especial will, and his just judgment, and by his mercy, to deliver us out of that embarrassment, and to save our family and kingdom from the shame and the dangers, by abridging yesterday the life of our said son Alexis, after an illness with which he was seized as soon as he had heard the sentence of death pronounced against him. That illness appeared at first like an apoplexy; but he afterwards recovered his senses, and received the holy sacraments as a Christian; and, having desired to see us, we went to him immediately, with all our councillors and senators; and then he acknowledged and sincerely confessed all his said faults and crimes committed against us, with tears and all the marks of a true penitent, and begged our pardon, which, according to Christian and paternal duty, we granted him. After which, on the 7th July, at six in the evening, he surrendered his soul to God." It deserves remark, that this circular was drawn up the day after the decease of the prince. Why, it may be asked, if he died from natural causes, in such haste to anticipate rumours of an opposite kind?

Among the foreigners who went to the fortress in the suite of the czar was Peter Henry Bruce, whose veracity has not been questioned, while his predilections were all in favour of his master, whom he delights to extol. He states: —

"His majesty, attended by all the senators and bishops, with several others of high rank, went to the

fort, and entered the apartments where the czarevitch was kept prisoner. Some little time thereafter Marshal Weyde came out, and ordered me to go to Mr. Bear's the druggist, whose shop was hard by, and tell him to *make the* POTION STRONG *which he had bespoke, as the prince was then very ill. When I delivered this message to Mr. Bear, he turned quite pale, and fell a shaking and trembling, and appeared in the utmost confusion, which surprised me so much, that I asked him what was the matter with him; but he was unable to return me any answer.* In the meantime the marshal himself came in, much in the same condition with the druggist, saying he ought to have been more expeditious, as the prince was very ill of an apopletic fit. Upon this the druggist delivered him a silver cup with a cover, which the marshal himself carried into the prince's apartments, staggering all the way as he went like one drunk. About half an hour after the czar with all his attendants withdrew with very dismal countenances, and when they went the marshal ordered me to attend at the prince's apartment, and in case of any alteration to inform him immediately thereof. There were at that time two physicians and two surgeons in waiting, with whom, and the officer on guard, I dined on what had been dressed for the prince's dinner. The physicians were called in immediately after to attend the prince, who was struggling out of one convulsion into another, and after great agonies expired." Though Bruce

delivers no opinion of his own, it is evident that he suspected foul play. "Very few," he adds, "believed he died a natural death; but it was dangerous for people to speak as they thought." The Dutch minister, whose letters were intercepted, was put under arrest for writing home concerning the current rumours. Without invalidating the testimony of Bruce, writers favourable to Peter explain it away by referring the agitation of the druggist to the naturally alarming circumstances of the period, and by supposing the "strong potion" to mean a powerful opiate. Voltaire, who clears the sovereign, makes the odd remark, that he had one of the finest pharmaceutical establishments in Europe at his command.

It may be argued that the czar had no need to compass surreptitiously the destruction of the czarevitch, as he was already dead in law, and the sentence only awaited execution. But, specious as this argument appears, its force abates upon examination. The tribunal, in awarding the punishment of death, did not prescribe its mode; the sentence was also referred to the merciful consideration of the supreme power; and it was no doubt generally believed that, with such a reference, where a son was concerned, the penalty would be commuted to perpetual seclusion in a convent. In no way could Peter escape from the odious responsibility of refusing to exercise his prerogative, and of singly deciding upon a legal execution, while effecting his object, than by forestalling the office of the execu-

tioner. Though not inclined to pay much attention to the opinions of others, he might think his reputation at stake in the eyes of Europe, with the honour of Russia, when the crisis came; and have determined upon attempting to save both by veiling the accomplishment of his purpose under the guise of a natural occurrence. That he was capable of such a crime is evident from his general cruelty and inveterate resentments, with his readiness to sacrifice everything to public interests. It is impossible to read the narrative of Bruce, a partisan, and an actor on the occasion, without regarding it as a virtual impeachment of his master; and, while evidence is wanting to enable history to convict the accused of the foul deed, it cannot record a verdict of acquittal. But, apart from the complicity of Peter in the death of Alexis, his conduct from the moment the czarevitch placed himself in his hands has rarely been equalled in heartlessness and perfidy. From first to last he never exhibited the slightest relenting, or faltered in bringing an unfortunate son by the most tortuous means to an ignominious sentence, though a voluntary promise had been solemnly given to pardon his offences, on the faith of which the offender had surrendered. Better far to have smote him to the earth as he reached the gates of Moscow, than to have exposed him to five weary months of humiliation and agony, finishing the persecution with a capital condemnation, and a "strong potion," the ingredients of which are unknown.

CHAP. XI.

CATHERINE I. AND MENZIKOFF.—ANNE AND BIREN.

EXTRAORDINARY CAREER OF CATHERINE. — HER CORONATION AT MOSCOW. — CHARACTER OF MENZIKOFF. — LAW OF SUCCESSION. — REIGN OF CATHERINE. — HER WILL. — PETER II. — FALL OF MENZIKOFF. — HIS EXILE AND DEATH. — THE EMPRESS ANNE. — BIREN. — AFFAIRS OF POLAND. — WAR WITH TURKEY. — COLLISION WITH SWEDEN. — MURDER OF SINCLAIR. — SPLENDOUR OF THE COURT. — ICE-PALACE. — NOTICES OF CRONSTADT. — ATROCITIES OF BIREN. — INCIDENT AT ASTRACHAN. — SETTLEMENT OF THE CROWN.

THE eventful career of Catherine supplies an instance of change of circumstances to which no parallel can be found even in the annals of an oriental dynasty. She not only rose from the obscurity of an orphan peasant girl to imperial station, but passed from the condition of a captive to the autocracy of the very country into which she was led a prisoner, and was successively the paramour of subalterns, the wife of their master, his consort on the throne, and its sole occupant upon his decease. The fortunes of this remarkable woman throw such distinct light upon the loose manners of the Russian court, that the leading facts may be noted. In

1702, when Marienburg, a small town on the borders of Livonia, was taken from the Swedes, a young girl was captured named Martha, a domestic in the household of the Lutheran clergyman, just married to a dragoon belonging to the garrison. Pleased with her appearance and manners, General Bauer took her into his service; and, believing her husband slain, she lived with him as his mistress. Prince Menzikoff, calling one day upon the general, was struck with her beauty; and, being too powerful for his wishes to be resisted, she was resigned to his protection. Peter, looking in upon the prince, was equally charmed, and robbed him of his prize. Martha, exchanging her name for that of Catherine, maintained for a time the same relation to the czar, but was afterwards privately married to him, then publicly acknowledged, and finally crowned Empress of all the Russias. Though without education or much natural talent, she had great tact and good sense, was of remarkably vivacious temper, and acquired an extraordinary ascendency over the mind of Peter by acting towards him the part of Nell Gwyn to Charles II. "She was," says Gordon the Scot, "a very pretty well-lookt woman. The great reason why the czar was so fond of her was her exceeding good temper; she was never seen peevish or out of humour; obliging and civil to all, and never forgetful of her former condition; withal mighty grateful." The best feature of her character was humanity. She endeavoured to repress

the violent passions of her husband, and saved many an object of his resentment from the knout and exile.

It was fortunate for Peter that Catherine accompanied him on his campaigns, for to her suggestive genius and dextrous management he was indebted for their common preservation, with that of the army from surrender or destruction, when surrounded by the Turks on the Pruth. While sitting moody and solitary in his tent, having given strict orders to be left undisturbed, she boldly entered, urged him to negotiate, probably the last expedient that would have occurred to him, offered to undertake the measure herself, and formed, from her own jewels and trinkets, with whatever money and plate could be collected in the camp, the bribe which disposed the grand vizier to forego pressing his advantage. In acknowledgment of this service especially, the czar resolved to confer upon her the imperial crown; and in 1724, the year before his own decease, the ceremony was performed with great splendour at Moscow, in the presence of the dignitaries of the empire and the foreign ambassadors. At nine o'clock in the morning the clergy assembled in the cathedral. At ten the royal procession set out, all the bells of the capital ringing. The guards, valets, and pages wore green coats and red waistcoats, overspread with gold and silver lace. Six negroes were prominent, dressed in black velvet edged with gold, and wearing muslin turbans, adorned with red and white plumes.

Galitzin and Osterman carried the imperial mantle, which was of cloth of gold lined with ermine; Dolgorouki bore the globe; Bruce the Scot had charge of the crown; and Lesly, another Scot, was on horseback, throwing money among the people. In the church, when the parties had taken their places, the archbishop of Novgorod advanced towards the empress, and requested her to repeat aloud the confession of the orthodox faith. This was the Athanasian creed. The prelate then gave her his benediction, consecrated her with the sign of the cross, and prayed: "Look down from thy holy dwelling-place on high, and render worthy of thy sacred unction our great and orthodox Empress Catherine Alexowna, whom Thou hast chosen to be the sovereign lady and ruler over thy people, and whom Thou hast redeemed by the precious blood of thy only Son. Invest her with power; crown her with a precious diadem; grant her long life; put the sceptre of salvation into her hands; place her on the throne of justice; defend her with the armour of the Holy Spirit; make her arm strong; put all infidel nations under her dominion; let her heart be always inclined to fear Thee, and her will be always obedient to thine; let her judge thy people righteously, do justice to the afflicted, relieve the children of the poor; and let her at last obtain thy heavenly kingdom." Peter himself robed the empress in the imperial mantle, and placed the crown upon her head. After the ceremony, Menzikoff followed in her

train, magnificently attired, and supported by two officers of state, each carrying a purse containing coronation medals, which were distributed to the crowd. What a change to both from their original position and subsequent relation! Catherine, the housemaid of a Lutheran divine, and Menzikoff the drudge of a pastry-cook—then Catherine a concubine kept by Menzikoff a prince—next Catherine an empress, and Menzikoff one of her grandees. Such a transition could not have occurred in any other European country, even Turkey not excepted.

While a crouching slave in the presence of his master, receiving the strokes of his cane with the docility of a spaniel, Menzikoff was a supercilious satrap to almost every one else; and would insolently threaten with a journey to Siberia the highest officers of state who incurred his displeasure. Though ignorant as a boor, he had great practical skill, was fertile in resources, and could adapt himself to numerous avocations, besides being a competent military commander. Fond of show, and addicted to the grossest libertinism, he contrived not only to provide for an extravagant expenditure, but to amass wealth, by an oppressive use of power and embezzlement of the finances of the state. Peter, aware of his knavery, beat him, put him under arrest, and mulcted his property. But he continued incorrigibly peculant; and by dextrously making himself too useful to be easily dispensed with, he

managed to retain his position through the reign as the first subject in the empire. Finding it impossible to cure him of roguery, Peter contented himself with making him occasionally disgorge his gains. Once the senate drew up a formal statement of his depredations, with the proofs; but no one ventured to proceed farther than to lay the paper on the table opposite the czar's seat. He read it, but made no remark; and the paper remained day after day in its place. At last one of the senators, bolder than the rest, asked him what he thought of it. "Nothing," was the reply, "but that Menzikoff will always be Menzikoff." Thus despotism everywhere lightly passes over the crimes of serviceable minions and personal favourites, while punishing with inhuman rigour the indiscretions of those inimical to its rule.

It is remarkable that Peter left the succession to the throne completely unsettled, though anxious to preserve to Russia his own institutions after his decease, he had disinherited Alexis, and hounded him to the death. Four years after that era of crime he abolished the hereditary succession, in order to deprive the young grand-duke Peter, son of the czarevitch, of the crown. It was ordained that every future monarch should be at liberty to constitute as his successor the person whom he should deem most worthy — a law fraught with mischief and danger to the state. All the authorities of the empire, and the inhabitants of the two capitals,

with those of the provinces, were solemnly sworn to recognise as emperor and sovereign the party approved and appointed by himself. Yet he neglected to avail himself of this power; and died without naming who was to succeed him. No sooner was his approaching dissolution known, than the partisans of ancient manners bestirred themselves, wishing to place the grand-duke upon the throne; but the promptness and activity of Menzikoff defeated the design. He seized the treasure, secured the fortress, obtained the support of the Archbishop of Novgorod for the empress, and gained the officers of the guards by promises and bribes. Catherine, at a meeting of her friends in the palace, while Peter was wrestling with death, claimed the throne by virtue of her coronation at Moscow, and stated the evils of a minority; but expressly declared, to conciliate opponents, that, so far from depriving the grand-duke of the crown, she would hold it as a sacred deposit, to be restored to him at her own decease. The czar soon afterwards expired; upon which the great council assembled to decide the question of the sovereignty, while the guards, each of whom had received a largess, surrounded the palace with drums beating and colours flying. Menzikoff demanded of the secretary of the late emperor whether his master had left any written or verbal declaration of his intentions? The reply was vague and unsatisfactory. But Theophanes, Archbishop of Pleskow, affirmed it to be

known to numbers, that Peter had declared, on the evening before the coronation of the empress, in the house of an English merchant at Moscow, that he should place the crown upon her head with no other view than to leave her mistress of the empire after his death. "What need have we," said Menzikoff, "of any testament? A refusal to conform to the inclination of our great sovereign, thus authenticated, would be both unjust and criminal. Long live the Empress Catherine!" Others repeated the cry; the troops without, with a fee of six pounds a man in their pockets, vociferated the strain; and Catherine became empress in much the same manner as the later Roman emperors gained the purple, by the suffrages of the prætorian cohorts, without the consent of the people or the legions.

During the brief reign of Catherine I. — little more than two years, — virtually the reign of Menzikoff, the strange spectacle was exhibited of a great empire having two persons at its head, neither of whom could read or write. Her daughter Elizabeth usually wrote her signature for her to domestic documents, and Osterman to public decrees and foreign dispatches. The empress illustrated her humane disposition by removing the gibbets with which various parts of the country were thickly studded, causing the unburied bodies of executed persons to be interred, and recalling many exiles from Siberia. She made herself popular

with the troops by paying up their arrears; and with the people by reducing the annual capitation tax. The Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, projected by her husband, was established, and liberally endowed; and her daughter the Princess Anne was united to the Duke of Holstein, — an event important in its consequences, as it placed the present race of sovereigns upon the throne. But, from almost the moment of her elevation to the position of autocatrix, Catherine was unhappy, and personally inglorious. The old nobility could not forget her obscure birth and early degradation; and papers were dropped in the streets of the capital sarcastically alluding to her origin and former habits. Either driven to recklessness by these allusions, or intoxicated by power, or simply having loose propensities set free from the surveillance of a rigid sovereign, she abandoned herself to such a career of intemperance, general immorality, and neglect of the duties of her high station, as would probably have exposed her to the disgrace of dethronement, had her life been prolonged. Her known predilection for brandy and Tokay renders the following congratulatory epistle from the Shah of Persia peculiarly piquant: "I hope," said he, "my well beloved sister, that God has not made thee love strong liquors. I who write to thee have eyes like rubies, a nose like a carbuncle, and cheeks inflamed with burning fire; and, owing to this unfortunate propensity, I am forced to

waste my days and nights on a bed of misery." Catherine ended her days in May 1727, of organic disease, exasperated by irregularities.

Faithful to her promise respecting the grand-duke, the son of Alexis, the empress named him in her will for the succession; and he ascended the throne as Peter II. when eleven years of age. By another article, the contrivance of which need not be specified, she enjoined, that he should marry Maria, a daughter of Menzikoff. Thus the proud and grasping minister of two sovereigns had the prospect before him of higher distinction, by becoming the father-in-law of a third, ruling the empire during his minority, and closely connecting his family for ever with the royal house. But, unfortunately for this ambitious scheme, the czar was not smitten with his proposed bride. The charms of Catherine Dongorouki, belonging to one of the old families, universally described as beautiful, accomplished, and amiable, made a deep impression upon his mind; and her relatives becoming his advisers, the doom of Menzikoff was soon sealed. In September 1727, after rising from the humblest class of society to the highest dignities, holding the destinies of nations in his hand, and placing his descendants within a single footstep of the throne, he was ordered to Siberia, with his wife, son, and two daughters, one of whom was the intended bride of the emperor. His immense wealth was confiscated to the imperial

treasury, from which, indeed, no small portion of it had been surreptitiously obtained; and ten roubles a day were allowed for the maintenance of the family. Among other items of property, he was found possessed of nine millions of roubles in bank notes and securities, one million in cash, 105 lb. of gold and 420 lb. of silver plate, jewels and precious stones to the value of a million; besides a palace in the capital, châteaux in the country, 100,000 serfs, and landed estates so extensive, that it was said he might travel from Riga on the Baltic to Derbent on the Caspian and sleep every night on his own domains. Possibly the boy monarch had been informed that Alexander Menzikoff's name was at the head of the signatures appended to the sentence of death passed upon his father.

The fallen minister reached Beresov, a town on the Obi, his prescribed place of exile. At this spot, then a group of miserable log-houses, the sun just peeps above the horizon at the winter solstice, and a day of four hours alternates with a night of twenty; the light prevailing through seven months of the year is that of the "half-dark day," as the Russians call the sombreness occasioned by a murky atmosphere; and the earth only thaws at the surface in summer, remaining constantly frozen below. The strange reverse of circumstances crushed the spirit of Menzikoff. He became a devotee, helped with his own hands to erect a little wooden church now fallen to decay, went to

the forest, axe on shoulder, to fell trees for the work, then served as bell-ringer in it, and was finally buried by the inhabitants of the town before the door of the building, having sunk in little more than two years beneath the shock of political disgrace. His resting-place, not marked by any monument, but known only through tradition, remained undisturbed till 1821, when the Governor of Tobolsk had the grave opened. The coffin was found to be imbedded in frozen soil; and owing to this circumstance, after the lapse of ninety-two years, its contents had undergone so little change, that pieces of the clothing which wrapped the body were sent to the descendants of the deceased as relics. The site of the wooden hut he occupied is still pointed out near the Spaska church, the dwelling itself having been destroyed by a conflagration. A few years afterwards, Osterman and Dolgorouki, both the colleagues of Menzikoff in the councils of Peter I., were sent as exiles to the same place; both like him ended their days at the dreary sequestered spot; and many of the ablest men of the mother country have since been deported to it by the vicissitudes of court favour, or political transgressions. It has been said, without much exaggeration, that the flower of the Russian court and army lie buried beneath the snow of Beresov.

The youthful Peter II. did not attain his majority. He was hastily carried off by small-pox in February

1730; and with him the male race of the Romanoffs became extinct, when the succession devolved to the female representatives, from whom the supreme council made an arbitrary selection. The choice fell upon Anne, second daughter of Ivan, the step-brother of Peter I., who had married the Duke of Courland, and was now the dowager duchess. But the offer of the sovereignty was accompanied with conditions which reduced the imperial autocracy to a shadow, and substituted a coterie of seven nobles, distinct from the senate, originally established by Catherine I., as a council of private advice, or secret chancery, invested with irresponsible power. She was to govern solely according to their pleasure; not to declare war or conclude peace without their consent; not of herself to impose any new tax upon the people, alienate or dispose of the crown lands, marry, or name a successor; and not to bring her chamberlain and favoured lover Von Biren into Russia. This was an attempt to curb the tyranny of the throne by creating another, and a worse species of despotism. In the high privy council the influence of the Dolgorouki family predominated; and one of that house, with two colleagues, was sent to Mittau, the Courland capital, to announce her election to the duchess, and declare the conditions. Upon entering the chamber of audience, he observed a man rather meanly dressed, to whom he made a sign to retire; but as the hint was not taken, he took him by the arm to enforce

it. The duchess interfered. The man was Biren, who subsequently revenged himself by causing the elder Dolgorouki to be banished, while three princes were beheaded, two were imprisoned for life, and one was broken on the wheel. The nobles who were not of the high council were violently opposed to it; and, having a secret understanding with them, Anne accepted the conditions, and gained the throne. But scarcely had the name of empress been obtained, before she assumed the power of autocratrix, abolished the council of seven, appointed her own cabinet, declared by manifesto that she ascended the throne of her ancestors not by election but in virtue of hereditary right, though an elder sister was living; and Biren speedily appeared in Russia to occupy the place near her which Menzikoff had filled near to Catherine.

During the ten years' reign of the empress, Munich, an able but self-willed German, was at the head of the army, which he brought to a high state of efficiency. Osterman, another German, and an experienced politician, presided in the cabinet. But the imperial favourite had ascendant influence with the throne over the general and the minister; though having no capacity for government himself, he was compelled to treat them with respect, needing their services in the direction of the state. John Ernest Biren was the son of a gamekeeper in Courland. Having obtained a place in the household of the dowager-duchess, he won

by his figure and address the post of secretary and chamberlain; and upon Anne becoming an absolute monarch at St. Petersburg, she summoned him from Mittau to her capital. He rapidly advanced to honour, wealth, and power, obtained through the influence of his mistress with the nobles, along with the aid of her troops, the dukedom of Courland, upon the death of the last of the Kettler family; and became the terror of the empire by the barbarous despotism which he wielded. To conceal his humble extraction, he wrote his name Biron, and adopted the arms of that illustrious French family, of which he pretended to be a scion.

The public policy of the empress was based upon that of her uncle Peter I. In 1734, her armies under Munich and Lacy dictated a sovereign to Poland, subservient to Russia, in opposition to one elected by the people, in the interest of France; and a corps sent to assist the German emperor against the French reached the banks of the Rhine—the first instance of Russian troops having advanced so far into the heart of Europe. In the following year, the provinces on the Caspian obtained from Persia were returned to that power for a commercial equivalent, as their occupation entailed onerous burdens upon the empire. Though held little more than ten years, it was computed that not less than 130,000 men had perished in them, from the unhealthy climate, and constant forays with the turbulent natives. Russia, in alliance with Austria, now bore down upon

the Turkish empire, to reverse the hard conditions wrung from Peter on the Pruth, and extend the frontier to the Black Sea. But a desolating warfare of four years did not alter relations between the territories of the sultan and the czarina. Though her armies were victorious under Munich and Lacy, who took Otchakow and Azof, forced the lines of Perekop, visited the Crimea with destructive inroads, and mastered Moldavia, the Austrians were so signally worsted as to be compelled to sue for peace; and thus left single-handed to continue the contest, the empress deemed it prudent to negotiate likewise, consenting to relinquish all her conquests. This war, which closed in 1739, was disgraced by wanton devastations, and was eminently disastrous to Russia, as no advantage was gained, while she lost more than 100,000 troops, and an immense amount of money. Thus failed the second attempt of the northern power to conquer a southern sea-board.

The menacing attitude of Sweden urged the imperial government to peace with Turkey, lest, while engaged in the south, a war should arise in the north. The Swedes had not reconciled themselves to the cessions of territory wrested from them by Peter I.; and while restless under the thought of national humiliation, an atrocious deed excited intense and universal exasperation. In 1738, Major Sinclair left Stockholm on a mission from the government to the court of Constantinople. While returning in the following

year, he was informed, on approaching the Polish frontier, that Russian emissaries were upon the look-out for him, and cautioned to take care of himself. But the idea of outrage being offered him on neutral ground was dismissed as too monstrous to be entertained. At an inn in Breslau, he met with two officers, Captain Kutler and Lieutenant Levitzki, who had four soldiers with them disguised as servants; and, having learnt the route of the Swedish envoy, they waited for him near the village of Zauche. Upon his coming up, Kutler greeted him politely, and asked whether he was Major Sinclair. Being answered in the affirmative, he arrested him in the name of the Empress Anne, and conducted him into a wood near Neuburg. Here, being made to alight from his carriage, he was taken about twenty paces from it, when Kutler shot him with a pistol, while Levitzki and the rest kept guard over Couturier, the travelling companion of the unfortunate officer. The latter was taken to the Russian fort of Sonnenstein; and the assassins possessed themselves of the effects of the travellers. Upon this outrage becoming known, the German Emperor complained loudly of it as a violation of his territory; but Anne caused a declaration to be drawn up, asserting her entire ignorance of the act. She knew nothing of it; but Biren, Osterman, and Munich contrived the murder, in order to obtain the despatches of the envoy. The populace of Stockholm rose upon receiving intelligence

of Sinclair's assassination, assailed the house of the Russian ambassador, broke the windows; and, with few exceptions, the whole nation became clamorous for war.

In her domestic policy Anne followed out the plans of her uncle. She completed the Ladoga canal which he commenced, to facilitate the transport of supplies to St. Petersburg; improved the army by instituting a corps of engineers, till then unknown in the service; promoted commerce, established silk and woollen manufactures, and patronised skilful foreign artizans. Owing to her long residence in Courland, the tastes of the empress were comparatively refined; and, under her auspices, the manners of the court became more decorous, though enough of boorishness and insobriety was publicly displayed. She delighted in magnificence; and perhaps exceeded any other contemporary potentate in the splendour of her spectacles. The memoirs of the time make special mention of a ball in the depth of a Russian winter, January 1734,—when the apartments were decorated with rows of blooming myrtles, and orange-trees in blossom; the seats were covered with fresh turf and placed under green and flowery arbours, so that it appeared as if the summer scenery of a southern clime had been suddenly transplanted by the wand of an enchanter, and set down amid the snows of a northern winter. Ambassadors from China were present upon the occasion, the only instance of a

Chinese embassy having appeared at any European court. The Chinamen were not bad courtiers, for upon one of them being asked by the empress which was the most beautiful of the assembled ladies, he answered—"It is difficult to decide on a starry night which particular star shines most brilliantly." Yet outbreaks of true Muscovite barbarism proclaimed this refinement and splendour to be artificial, for sumptuous entertainments often ended in debauch and quarrel; and Anne erected an ice-palace for a bridal pair, as if to express her sympathy with the national grossness.

To punish one of the Galitzins, who had incurred her displeasure, the empress caused him to be married to a woman of low birth. This occurring in the severe winter of 1740, she had a house built wholly of ice for the accommodation of the couple; and all the furniture, even to the nuptial bedstead, was of the same cold material. Cannon constructed of it were placed in front of the building, and fired several times without bursting. Persons of both sexes from the nations in the empire were procured from the provinces, to appear at the wedding, dressed in their national costume. In the procession, Galitzin and the bride were caged on the back of an elephant. Some of the attendants were mounted on camels; and others were drawn in sledges by goats, dogs, hogs, oxen, and reindeer. Cook, a Scotch army surgeon, in the service of Russia, who saw remains of the strange building, justly remarks:

"I could not help thinking that it looked as if Heaven had designed to let us see what a poor end the greatest earthly grandeur frequently comes to; for no sooner was this farce of mock magnificence ended, than that great empress was taken ill and died; and although the succeeding summer was extremely hot, yet part of the walls of that ice-house stood till the month of August, as it were to let people, living at the distance of thousands of miles, have time to witness the last whim of one of the greatest personages upon earth, only fit to amuse children."

The Scot's notices of the country, as it was 120 years ago, are of interest. "My short stay," says he, "in Cronstadt and my ignorance of fortification will not permit my giving an exact or satisfactory account of the place. Suffice it, however, to say, that it is, considering its infancy, a port of no small strength, great safety to shipping, and good policy. Directly opposite the port, at a little distance, is a small rock, well fortified and furnished with large cannon, called Cronslott. No persons are allowed to have fire or candle on board any ship in the harbour. A candle is allowed in great need; but the candlestick must be placed in a vessel with water. All gunpowder is taken from the ships before they enter the harbour, and securely put into the imperial magazines till the ships are warped out and ready to sail. Cocking-rooms are built at a distance from the ships next the

city, in the harbour, so that the water surrounds them on all sides, where the seafaring people are allowed to dress their meat. The royal navy here consists of about thirty ships of war: one of them, the Royal Anne, mounts 120 guns." Cook, while at Elsinore, had bought some flasks of brandy. But on reaching Cronstadt, they were seized by the custom-house officers, who immediately seated themselves with a view to drink, saying, *Boch dal*, "God hath sent." But a ruse of the mate disappointed them of a treat. He gravely stated, that the bottles belonged to a Scotch doctor; that there was poison in some of them; but as the doctor was absent, he could not say which was good or dangerous. Upon this they arose deploring the misfortune. At St. Petersburg the surgeon took up his abode in the only British public-house in the place, kept by one Frazer, a north countryman. During his stay, there were grand fire-works in honour of the capture of Azof, when the tail of a rocket fell upon the skull of a sailor and fractured it, who came under his care at the hospital. One night the city was fired, and he witnessed two men burnt alive at the stake, and a woman beheaded, as incendiaries.

Upon the death of the empress, Cook was at Astrachan, where he saw a prisoner released from a horrible confinement, by order of the governor, Prince Galitzin, to whose household he was attached. Upon the return of Peter I. to that city from his Persian

campaign, he directed, that if any one in the streets at night did not answer the sentinel's third summons, he was to be fired upon. Upon hearing this order of the day read, an ensign, named Pushkoff, thoughtlessly remarked, that if it were the czar himself who refused to answer he would fire upon him. The speech was reported, and he was sentenced to be immured. This was effected by putting him into a hole of the city wall, which was built up in front, leaving only a slit for the light to enter, and food to be given by the hand of charity. In this den the prisoner lost his reason. But his ravings being mistaken by the ignorant populace for inspiration, they carefully supplied him with victuals; and after being thus immured sixteen years, Cook witnessed his liberation.

But for an infatuated connection with Biren, a brutal and incapable favourite, the reign of Anne would have been comparatively happy, and not inglorious for Russia; and her own character would have contrasted favourably with that of the other female sovereigns. Completely controlling the empress, he ruled the empire, and made her sceptre a rod of iron. It is affirmed that she often fell on her knees before him, in the hope of moving him to clemency, but her prayers and tears were in vain. A foreigner himself, the most distinguished appointments were given to foreign adventurers, while the native nobility were insulted, banished, and punished in various ways upon

the most frivolous pretexts. In ten years, during which his power continued, 20,000 persons were sent to Siberia, of whom 5000 were never heard of more. Such was the general terror he inspired that, when he rode on horseback through the streets, the people would exclaim, "It is Biren, let us run!" Foot passengers got out of his way, while those who were in carriages, alighted to pay him respect. Yet while shedding torrents of blood, and horribly oppressing the people by excessive taxation, the ministers of Vienna, Berlin, and Saxony lavished the vilest adulations upon the upstart Courlander, stooped to kiss his hand, and drank his health with the sentiment: — "Perdition to whoever refuses to do the like, and is not the true, sincere, and faithful friend of his Highness, the Duke de Biren."

In anticipation of her own decease, the empress determined to nominate her successor, according to the power with which she was invested by the law of Peter I. With a view to this object, she married her niece Anne, a daughter of the Duchess of Mechlenburg, her eldest sister, to Anthony Ulric, of Brunswick, brother of the reigning duke, who took up his residence in Russia. A son was the offspring of this marriage, born in August 1740, who received the name of Ivan; and in October this baby prince was declared successor to the empire, while Biren was to hold the office of regent, in case the throne became vacant during his minority.

Though his parents, as his natural guardians, were the proper parties for the regency, the arrangement was made in order to continue the power of the favourite; and for selfish reasons it was strongly advised by Osterman and Munich. Ten days afterwards, October 28th, the empress expired. How feeble is despotism! Within a month after the will began to take effect Biren was in a fortress, from which he was transferred to Siberia. Soon afterwards Osterman and Munich, parties both to his rise and downfall, were trudging after him into exile, and actually overtook him on the road. The infant czar grew up to be an idiot youth in a dungeon; and his parents ended their days in sorrow and straits on the banks of the northern Dwina.

CHAP. XII.

THE IDIOT CZAR AND THE ROYAL EXILES.

FALL OF BIREN.— THE BRUNSWICK REGENCY.— THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.— EMBASSY FROM PERSIA.— WAR WITH SWEDEN.— LESTOCQ AND ELIZABETH.— A REVOLUTION.— OSTERMAN AND MUNICH.— AGENTS OF THE REVOLUTION.— MISFORTUNES OF THE BRUNSWICK FAMILY.— TERRIBLE SCENE AT ST. PETERSBURG. — TONGUE-CUTTING. — THE EXILES OF CHOLMOGORI.— THE STORY OF IVAN —HIS ASSASSINATION— FATE OF HIS FAMILY.

A BABY two months old, under the name of Ivan VI., was now Czar of all the Russias; and Biren the regent, with the prospect before him of holding the office for seventeen years, as that time was fixed upon in the will of the late empress for the young emperor attaining his majority. He took up his abode in the imperial summer palace, and adopted the title of "Highness, Regent of the Russian Empire," but was only master of his stupendous fortune twenty-two days. Nothing could be more unsatisfactory to the prince and princess of Brunswick than the arrangement which deprived them of the guardianship of the realm during the minority of their son; and Munich having some reason to regret the part he had acted in advancing Biren, came to an understanding with them, and readily un-

dertook to displace him. Being sure of the army, which he had long commanded, it was easy to effect the overthrow of a detested adventurer. On the evening before it was executed, the field-marshal supped at the palace with the regent. During supper-time Biren seemed thoughtful; and suddenly addressing Munich, inquired, "M. le Mareschal, have you never gone upon any important enterprise in the night-time?" The latter thought his scheme had been discovered; but maintained sufficient composure to answer, "I cannot call to mind any extraordinary matters that I have undertaken during the night, but I make it a rule to seize all opportunities that seem favourable to my views." His movements were quickened by the inquiry. In the dead of the same night, a detachment of forty grenadiers under one of his aides-de-camp seized Biren in his bed, and transferred him a prisoner to the guard-room, where he was despoiled of his gold watch and money; and early the next day Anne of Brunswick received homage as the guardian of the empire and her son. After being confined for some time in the fortress of Schlusselburg, the late regent was exiled to Pelim in Siberia, where he had to associate with many whom he had himself banished and doomed to misery.

The new regency was constituted November 9th, 1740, and had a troubled existence of rather more than twelve months. The Princess Anne was an amiable

woman, of retiring habits, averse to business, but over-jealous of interference with her authority. Her husband, Prince Anthony Ulric, was ignorant, incompetent, and aspiring. Differences speedily arose between them, and while husband and wife jarred, the overbearing temper of Munich brought him into collision with both, and also rendered it difficult for Osterman, who retained his post as chief minister, to act with him. While the principal parties in the government were thus discordant, the grandees of the empire were sullenly discontented. "Most of them," writes Finch, the British ambassador at this period, "are inveterate Russians, and only violence and superior force hinder them from returning to the old course. There is not one of them who would not wish Petersburg at the bottom of the sea, and all the conquered provinces at the devil, so they could but remove to Moscow; where, by being in the neighbourhood of their estates, they could live in greater splendour and at less expense. They will have nothing to do with Europe. They hate all foreigners, and would, at the most, only employ them in war, and then get rid of them. They equally abominate all voyages by sea, and would rather be sent to the very worst part of Siberia than on board a fleet." While this was largely the state of national feeling, there was living at St. Petersburg the Princess Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Peter I. and Catherine, whom many considered as unlawfully deprived of

her inheritance. Being of indolent disposition, she had remained perfectly quiet since the death of her mother, and had shown no disposition either for the crown, marriage, or court-life, content to visit the barracks, and follow low amours with grenadiers of the guard. But from the moment that the crown was given to an infant, under the tutelage of a foreigner, followed by the guardianship of his parents, who were themselves more foreigners than Russians, remotely descended from the house of Romanoff, it was loudly whispered by intriguers into her ear that she ought to claim the throne for herself. The princess had, indeed, no legitimate claim to it, since all the children of Peter I. by Catherine were the fruit of a double adultery, his first wife Eudokhia, and her first husband the Swedish dragoon, being both alive when they were born. But this not being deemed a difficulty, she made the attempt, and succeeded.

During the Brunswick regency, a remarkable embassy entered the empire from Nadir Shah of Persia, to ask for the princess Elizabeth in marriage. As if to attain his object by the forcible abduction of the lady, he sent the envoy with a suite of 16,000 men and 20 pieces of cannon. But this army of visitors was stopped by the alarmed authorities on the frontier; and, by mutual consent, the ambassador travelled to St. Petersburg with a reduced train of 3000 attendants on horseback, 14 elephants, and 30 camels. He presented

the regent with the elephants, and large diamonds from the spoils of Delhi, with costly brocades; but did not succeed in his matrimonial mission. The animals would have been gladly declined; but one portion of the gift could not be decorously accepted without the other.

The war with which Sweden had threatened Russia, to recover territory and revenge an assassination, was declared in August 1741. It brought to St. Petersburg a remarkable chief of the Don Cossacks, named Krosno Tzockin, or "Red-Cheeks," who had served in Finland against the Swedes under Peter I. Upon being presented at court, he regretted that his former master had not followed his advice, for had that been the case there would have been no occasion for another war. "I advised the great emperor," said he, "to cut off women and children; and now these very infants, then sucking their mothers' breasts, with many born since, form the army we have to fight." So notorious was "Red-Cheeks" that Finch mentions him in his despatches:— "He is turned of seventy, but has a great deal of desperate brutal courage. He has knocked off several score of his prisoners' heads, sometimes in cold blood, sometimes in drunken fits, but always, as he says, to keep his hand in; and has been wounded all over his body, on which occasions he only makes use of human fat by outward application, and inwardly a glass of brandy." This brute was shot by the enemy in a Finland morass during the first campaign. Sweden, completely unsuc-

cessful in the war, was glad to conclude a peace in 1743 on the basis of that of Nystadt; but meanwhile a revolution had given a new sovereign to Russia.

The chief agent in the advancement of Elizabeth was her medical attendant, Lestocq, a Frenchman. He had no talent or influence, but was simply adventurous, and anxious to advance his own interests. His first accomplices were a corporal and a trumpeter. But obtaining money from the Marquis la Chetardie, the French ambassador, who anticipated political advantages to his own country from a revolution, he soon secured by bribes a number of the troops. They were predisposed to aid the princess owing to her fondness for the barracks, and as being the daughter of Peter, while Munich was no longer dreaded, having been removed from the command of the army. Elizabeth hesitated long before taking the final step; and certainly would never have taken it at all, but for the fear that, the intrigue being suspected, she might be consigned to a convent. One day Lestocq presented her with a card, on one side of which she was represented *crowned*, and on the other *veiled*. "Make your choice, madam," said he; "either a crown or a nunnery." It appears, from Finch's reports, that the husband of the regent did let fall hints about a convent, if the conduct of the princess was at all equivocal; "which, I believe," says the ambassador, "of all things in the world would not please her, for she has not one bit of nun's flesh about her."

Though repeatedly warned of her danger, the regent herself continued unsuspicious and confiding to the last. The crisis came in the winter night of November 24., when Elizabeth submitting to the guidance of Lestocq, placed herself in the hands of a small body of the guards. They seized the Prince and Princess of Brunswick in bed, the infant Ivan in his cot, with Munich, Osterman, and others, who were the main supporters of the regency. Prince Anthony, not allowed time to dress himself, was bundled off to a sledge wrapped up in the bed-clothes. Early the next morning the new sovereign took possession of the palace; the troops shouted their congratulations, and the inhabitants of the capital took the oath of fealty. It is said that when the little Ivan, now fifteen months old, heard the shouts of the soldiers, he endeavoured to imitate their vociferations; upon which Elizabeth exclaimed, "Poor babe! thou knowest not that thou art joining in the noise that is raised at thy undoing." Thus as easily, and with the same stealth, in the silence and darkness of night, as the former government had been overthrown, an end was put to the reign of the Brunswick dynasty in Russia; and the management of a great empire was changed by a revolution which a surgeon set on foot, with a corporal and a trumpeter for his first assistants. Four times, in little more than a twelvemonth, the oath of allegiance was administered to the people, first to Ivan as emperor, then to Biren as

regent, next to Anne in the same office, and finally to Elizabeth as empress. So much for the stability of absolute as compared with popular governments.

The chief members of the late administration were speedily brought to trial; and never did men take to a reversed fortune with greater heroism than Munich and Osterman. The veteran soldier was not more self-willed than brave. Irritated at the interrogatories of his judges, he said to them, "Draw up yourselves the answers you would have me make, and I will sign them." They took him at his word, and he performed his promise. Munich was condemned to be quartered; Osterman, the ablest politician in Europe, was to be broken on the wheel; Golofkin, Levold, Mengden, and Temeriazeff, were to be beheaded. In January 1742, at ten o'clock in the morning, they stood upon a scaffold at St. Petersburg, bareheaded, awaiting execution. Five sheets of paper were read by a secretary, containing an enumeration of their crimes. Osterman, in his grey hairs, wearing a long beard, listened with an attentive but firm countenance. Munich, neatly shaved and dressed, stood erect and intrepid, as if at a review. Proceedings commenced with Osterman, who gravely prepared himself for death. Upon being told that the capital punishment of the prisoners was commuted to perpetual banishment, he broke silence for the first time, by simply asking for his cap and wig. He was sent to Beresov, and died an exile. Munich,

ordered to Pelim, overtook Birèn, going to the same place, at the passage of the Volga, where he had been detained by floods. The field-marshal occupied there a wooden house, with his wife and family, to which a small garden was attached, which he cultivated with his own hands. He received from the government a daily allowance of twelve copecks,—about sixpence,—which pittance he increased by keeping cows, selling milk, and teaching arithmetic. After an exile of twenty years, both Biren and Munich were recalled by Peter III. The former died in possession of the dukedom of Courland; the latter tranquilly ended his days at the advanced age of eighty-five.

While political foes were visited with the usual confiscations and punishments, the principal agents in the revolution enjoyed for a time the sunshine of court favour, but had little reason for self-congratulation in the issue. Lestocq, the surgeon, was appointed physician to the empress, and director-general of the medical institutions throughout the empire; but meddling with state affairs, he was arrested in 1748, and sent into exile. Grunstein, the corporal, created an adjutant and then major-general, was likewise banished. Schwarz, the trumpeter, made a colonel, and rewarded with estates, was ordered to quit the capital, and reside upon them. The soldiers of the body-guard, who effected the night arrests, received the rank of officers, with patents of nobility; but became so madly riotous

by the sudden elevation, entering houses and extorting money, that they were despatched to the regiments on active service. Nor did the French ambassador advance the interests of his country or his own; for being detected in a political plot in 1744, he was placed under arrest, deprived of all the orders, diamonds, and presents that had been bestowed upon him, and sent across the frontier under a military escort.

There is scarcely to be found, in the annals of Europe, a tale more tragic than that of the deposed Brunswick family. Elizabeth, soon after her accession, issued a manifesto, in which it was declared that, of her own "imperial grace," she had ordered the prince and princess, with their son, "to set out for their native country." They left St. Petersburg before the year expired, but never saw Germany; and the British ambassador informed his government, that "a subaltern officer was sent after the deposed czar and his parents, to give one of their maids the knout, without saying why, and immediately returned." The unfortunates arrived at Riga, January 6. 1742, where they remained eighteen months confined in the fortress; and were only allowed to take the air in a small garden, with a guard in attendance. They were sometimes in want of the common necessaries of life; and to aggravate their distress, the princess was taken ill, and miscarried in the fourth month of her imprisonment. Hopes were at times held out of being allowed to proceed to Ger-

many; but the empress always insisted, as a preliminary condition, that the princess should resign her claims to the throne by a formal act, which the latter firmly refused. This rendered the durance still more stringent, as an attempt at escape to recover the lost fortunes of her family was surmised. Applications were made to no purpose by the courts of Berlin, Vienna, Copenhagen, and London, to procure the liberty of the captives; for Anthony Ulric, besides being brother to the reigning duke of Brunswick, was brother to the queen of Denmark, brother-in-law to the king of Prussia, first cousin of the empress Maria Theresa, and related to the royal house of England. The prince might have had his liberty, but would not consent to leave his wife and son.

Determined not to release the captives, the empress was equally resolved not to tolerate any expressions of sympathy at their fate in her dominions. In August 1743, a most barbarous spectacle was exhibited at St. Petersburg. At a dinner party at the house of General Lapuchin, while the guests were discussing their wine, the conversation turned upon the deposed royal family, and commiseration was freely expressed in the confidence of social intercourse. Unfortunately one of the visitors, who held a high post in the fleet, had brought with him a naval officer, of whom he had not much knowledge, but who chanced to call upon him just as he was going to the party. This man turned

informer, and denounced the conversation of the company to the court in the hope of gaining promotion. The individuals concerned were at once arrested, brought to trial before three judges, and condemned to death. Lestocq, one of the judges, was in favour of the most cruel death known to the laws of Russia being inflicted. But this was overruled by Bestucheff, the grand-chancellor, whose sister was implicated, and who reminded Lestocq, in allusion to his profession, that by the laws of Great Britain surgeons and butchers were never permitted to be jurymen, or sit in judgment on the lives of their fellow creatures. The capital sentence was commuted. But on a scaffold before the senate house, General Lapuchin, his wife and son were knouted, and had their tongues cut out. The Countess Bestucheff suffered the same punishment. Two more were knouted. Zibin, general commissary in the fleet, was whipped. Madam Lielienfield, being pregnant, was kept in prison, and there whipped; and all the members of the ill-starred dinner party were sent into exile, except the informer, who was made colonel of a regiment of foot. The Countess Bestucheff came to the place of punishment with a ribbon about her neck, to which a gold cross richly set with diamonds was suspended. This the executioner demanded as a perquisite; but she refused to part with it, and the general of police ordered him to desist. He took his revenge by performing his office as cruelly as possible,

for the tongue of the unhappy lady was cut so near the root, that she bled to death. After this iniquitous proceeding, conversation was very guarded respecting the exiled family. Elizabeth's was eminently a tongue-cutting reign. The process inflicted little injury, if the parties who suffered it could sufficiently bribe the executioner, for he then took off only a very small portion of the tip. It was not uncommon to meet with nobles, officers, and ladies of rank, restored to their honours, who had undergone the punishment without the fact being betrayed by their speech. But woe to the individual who could not satisfy the avarice of the operator, or who provoked his wrath.

The illustrious prisoners were removed from Riga for greater security to Dunamunde, and lost the greater part of their effects on the way, being robbed by the guards who attended them. Here the princess was confined of a daughter who received the name of Elizabeth. The mother supported misfortune with courage and calmness, though it was her miserable doom to be reproached by her husband for the easy confidence which had brought the family to ruin. From Dunamunde they were transferred to Ranienburg, a town in the government of Rezan; and placed under the charge of Baron Korf. This officer behaved with great humanity to his prisoners, and did everything in his power to mitigate hardship. But he was soon removed from his post; and at Ranienburg, the

boy Ivan, now four years old, was separated from his parents, and never saw them again. They were finally exiled to Cholmogori, a small log-built town on an island of the northern Dwina, near the limits of the polar circle, fifty miles below Archangel. A house near the church, formerly occupied by the bishop, surrounded by high palings, was appointed their residence. On one side of the premises there was a barrack for the soldiers of the guard under the command of a lieutenant-colonel and three officers, while a second detachment under a lieutenant was quartered in the dwelling itself. The poor prisoners had the use of a garden, in which were a few birch trees, ferns, and nettles; but the snow lay deep upon it through seven months of the year. They were sometimes also driven a short distance in an old coach; but the coachman was a soldier, and a detachment of the guard always attended them. No other communication with the external world was allowed. They could speak to no one except their own servants and the troops; they had no books but a few religious works; and they could not even receive a physician, without express permission from the governor of the province, who lived at Archangel, and who was obliged to be present while they were visited. The princess was soon delivered from this life of dreary bondage. In 1745 she gave birth to a son, who received the name of Peter; and in 1746 to a second, who was called

Alexis. She died in the last confinement. Elizabeth, who had shown no mercy to her in life, had the corpse removed to St. Petersburg, and followed it herself to the sepulchre. The prince and his children remained in captivity.

The story of Ivan, upon being separated from his parents, is somewhat obscure. It is said, that being consigned to a monastery, one of the monks thought of making his fortune by carrying him off, but was overtaken near Smolensko. The fate of the monk is unknown, but may be readily conceived. It is certain that while yet a boy, Ivan was shut up in the fortress of Schlusselburg. This stronghold, to which many a state prisoner has been conveyed, occupies an island at the outlet of the Neva from Lake Ladoga. It was founded by the Swedes, and called Noteburg while in their possession. Upon its capture by the army of Peter I. he changed the name to Schlusselburg, "key-town," considering it the key to Ingria and Finland. Menzikoff was the first governor.

In this fortress, the boy Ivan, once a reigning czar, was so closely immured, that he may be said to have been almost buried alive. The light of heaven was excluded from his dungeon, and he was prohibited the refreshing breeze. He knew no change of seasons, and was unconscious of the alternation of day and night. His time passed in total inaction by the gloomy light of a solitary lamp. He had received no

education, and could neither read nor write, while the sentinels and officers were forbidden to converse with him. Kept from the fresh air, his frame became delicate, his beard grew prematurely, and to comb it was his chief amusement. Though at intervals this tremendous discipline was relaxed, his mind was shattered by it, and he grew up both half idiotic and a semi-savage. Once, in 1756, Elizabeth had him removed in a covered vehicle to St. Petersburg, to gratify her curiosity; and he was placed in a house belonging to the secretary of the secret police, under close watch. The empress, dressed in man's clothes, a common custom with her, saw the victim; but no change in his condition resulted from the interview. Her successor also, Peter III., in 1672, paid a visit to the prisoner at Schlusselburg, in the guise of a simple officer, attended by a few confidants, among whom were General Sternberg and Baron Korf. The latter had been his kind custodian when with his parents in early life.

They found the young man in an apartment the window of which admitted but a faint gleam of day, the light being intercepted by piles of wood heaped up in the court. He was in a dirty white jacket, with a pair of old shoes on his feet. His hair was very light, and cut short like that of a Russian slave. He was tolerably well made, and his complexion had a paleness which showed that the sun had scarcely ever shone on his face. He was then twenty-two years of age, and

though confined nearly twenty-one, he had received some impressions and ideas from his parents and others, which he still retained. Peter, affected at his condition, put several questions to him; among the rest, "Who are you?" "I am the czar Ivan." "Who put you into prison, then?" "Vile, wicked people." "Would you like to be emperor again?" "To be sure; why not? I should then have fine clothes, and servants to wait upon me." "But what would you do if you were emperor?" "I would cut off the heads of all those who have wronged me." Peter having then asked whence he learned what he told him, he answered, that he had it from the Virgin and the angels; and began to enter into long stories of these pretended visions. Though alone, he did not appear terrified at the sight of the emperor and his officers. He examined his dress and weapons with much curiosity and pleasure, as a bold child would have done. When asked again what he wished for, he answered, in his vulgar Russian dialect, "To have more air." Sternberg was left some time at Schlusselburg to gain his confidence, and find out whether his apparent imbecility were only assumed. He was soon convinced, however, that it was the natural consequence of his mode of life. He gave him, from the emperor, a silk morning gown. Ivan put it on with transports of joy, running about the room, and admiring himself as a savage would have done who had never been dressed before. As all his wishes centred

in the requisition of more air, Peter, who, with all his vices, was humane, sent the plan of a little circular house, in the centre of which was to be a garden, with orders to have it built for Ivan in the court of the fortress. But his own speedy murder prevented the execution of this design.

The captive was subsequently seen by Catherine II., as she affirmed in a manifesto issued after his assassination, but when, where, and with what design remains unknown. But it is quite certain that she changed his gaolers, and put over him two officers whom she could trust, who slept in his cell, and held her written order to put him to death in the event of any effort being made to release him, on the presumption that it could not otherwise be averted. An attempt to liberate the ill-fated prince was made, on the night of July 4. 1764, by one Mirovitch, a lieutenant in the garrison, upon which the two officers ran their swords through the body of their prisoner; and Ivan, who was dethroned while slumbering as an infant in his cot, was murdered at the age of twenty-four while asleep in his dungeon. The next day the body was exposed before the old wooden church of the fortress clothed in the habit of a sailor; and being wrapt up in a sheepskin, it was coffined, and interred without ceremony. Mirovitch was the only person executed for the conspiracy. This was much to his surprise, if he really suffered, and was not personated by some ordinary malefactor, for there is

reason for the gravest suspicion that the whole affair was pre-arranged, for the express purpose of getting rid of Ivan. Catherine issued a manifesto upon the occasion, filled with expressions of piety and humanity, the style commonly adopted by the court of St. Petersburg when its purposes are foul. While the officers who despatched him, after a decent interval, rose in the Russian service, it was a very odd circumstance that during the alleged revolt in the fortress, which led them to adopt the desperate expedient of taking the life of Ivan, not an individual besides sustained the slightest injury, except the governor, who merely received a passing blow on the head. "By a particular direction," says Catherine's manifesto, "of that Providence that watches over the life of man, there was that night a thick mist, which, together with the inward form and situation of the fortress, had this happy effect, that not one individual was either killed or wounded." Comment is needless upon this transparent hypocrisy.

The story of Ivan is one of the most lamentable to be found in general history or private records; and that of his father at Cholmogori, with his brothers and sisters, is scarcely less pathetic. For nearly twenty years, at the time of his death, they had been exposed to the cold, snows, and dreariness of the province of Archangel. Propositions were several times made to the father that he should return to Germany with the honours due to his high station; but they were in-

variably rejected, as the condition of leaving his children behind him was enjoined. Besides, he had been so long shut out from the affairs of the world as to have become unfitted or indisposed to mingle with them. "Why," said he, "should I go out of the Russian empire to publish the excess of my miseries, and to excite an unavailing compassion?" Years of confinement and hopelessness rolled on, without any improvement in the condition of the captives, till Anthony Ulric died, in 1776. He was in the sixty-second year of his age, and had passed thirty-five of them in prison —a strange fate for one connected with the royal houses of England, Prussia, Denmark, and Austria. The condition of the orphan family was rendered more melancholy by his decease. It consisted of two princes, Peter and Alexis, and two princesses, Catherine and Elizabeth, with some natural children, all of whom had been born in bonds, except the eldest daughter. Three years afterwards, in 1779, privy councillor Melgunef was appointed governor of the province, a humane man, who visited the unfortunates, administered every consolation in his power, and succeeded in obtaining their release. Upon the empress consenting to their liberation, negotiations were forthwith commenced with their aunt, Juliana Maria, the queen-dowager of Denmark, with a view to their removal to that kingdom; and Melgunef had not only the satisfaction of announcing deliverance to the captives, but

of presenting them with the means of making an appearance answering to their rank. The idea of going to an unknown country was at first terrifying to them; and they requested permission to remain at Cholmogori, in the enjoyment of liberty. But when assured of being placed under the care of a relative, while presents of furs, dresses, and jewels were displayed, they fell on their knees before their deliverer to testify their gratitude. The four brothers and sisters of Ivan were now between thirty and forty years old.

A frigate conveyed this interesting family from Archangel to Bergen in Norway, where the legitimate children took leave of the natural, the latter returning to Russia. The separation was lamented by both parties, who were united by constant association, affectionate feelings, and the bond of a common adversity. Embarking on board a Danish vessel, the princes and princesses were conducted to Denmark, and finally established at the town of Horsens in Jutland, as the place of their residence. They received an annual pension from the empress, occupied a commodious house on the esplanade, had a Russian priest to perform the service of the Greek Church in an adjoining chapel, and kept a small court consisting of a chamberlain, a physician, a steward, two ladies of honour, and the necessary servants. But uneducated and unaccustomed to society, they avoided notice, and

lived in exemplary union among themselves. The princess Elizabeth died of a rapid decline in October 1782; and her brother Alexis followed her to the grave in October 1787. But Catherine, the eldest of the family, survived to so late a date as the year 1807, and was beloved by all the inhabitants of the town. A plain monument of black marble marks the resting-place of these innocent victims to heartless policy of state.

CHAP. XIII.

TRAGEDY OF PETER III.

CHARACTER AND REIGN OF ELIZABETH. — THE DUKE OF HOLSTEIN-GOTTORP. — HIS UNHAPPY MARRIAGE. — BESTUCHEFF. — CORRUPTION OF THE COURT. — CONSPIRACY AND FALL OF BESTUCHEFF. — THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR. — ACCESSION OF PETER III. — RECALL OF THE EXILES. — IMPRUDENCE OF PETER. — CONSPIRACY AGAINST HIM. — CONDUCT OF CATHERINE. — PROCLAIMED EMPRESS AT ST. PETERSBURG. — PROCEEDINGS OF PETER. — HIS DETHRONEMENT. — REWARD OF THE CONSPIRATORS. — DANGER OF CATHERINE. — ASSASSINATION OF THE EMPEROR. — OFFICIAL NOTICES OF HIS DEATH.

No revolution was ever more emphatically condemned by the character and conduct of the party it exalted, than the one which placed the crown of Russia upon the head of Elizabeth. Vain and extravagant, lazy and ignorant, a voluptuary and a sot, she combined extreme superstition with immoral indulgences, paid a pilgrimage to Kiev, continued whole hours on her knees before the picture of some favourite saint, and was a very bigot with reference to the forms of the church. Though violating without scruple every divine command, she was horrified at a breach of ecclesiastical law; and would punish with inexorable rigour eating

an egg on a fast day, while resigning herself on other days to deep potations and licentious excess. On coming to the throne, she made a vow never to put her signature to a sentence of death; and kept the resolution, though the clergy offered to absolve her from the obligation. This was not the result of enlightened humanity; but of that mawkish sensibility which brought on hysterics at the sight of funeral habiliments, and drew tears when the numbers of the slain were mentioned in the very wars she ordered. If capital punishments were abolished, others were substituted worse than death, rendering life a constant agony; and if judges did not sentence to decapitation, they might order the knout to be so unmercifully applied, that the criminal perished from the lash. The secret chancery, a political court of inquisition, the parent of the existing system of Russian police, was in full activity through the twenty years of the reign. Paid spies and informers denounced thousands to this iniquitous tribunal, whose only crime was a look, a shrug of the shoulders, or a few harmless words, supposed to indicate disapproval of the measures of the government; and who, if not sent earless or tongueless home, suffered an unknown fate in distant underground dungeons, their friends never daring to inquire after them, or to speak of their doom, otherwise than by the expressive phrase "He has disappeared." The commandant at Rogervyk had usually ten thousand delinquents under his care,

all of them mutilated, either by having the tongue cut out, the sides of the nostrils torn away by red-hot pincers, their ears cut off, or their arms twisted behind them by dislocation at the shoulders. It is computed that the reign of the so-called clement Elizabeth cost the empire annually at least a thousand subjects, making a total of 20,000, who died in miserable imprisonment; and that not less than 80,000 persons were sent to Siberia.

To preserve personal independence, the empress decided upon not taking a husband to share the throne with her. Hence to provide for the succession, she sent for Charles Peter Ulrich, the only child of her sister Anne, eldest daughter of Peter I. and Catherine I. who married the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp. Both the parents of this nephew were now dead; and he was a minor in his fourteenth year, when, in 1742, the prize of an imperial diadem was placed before him. Soon after reaching the court of his aunt, he abjured Lutheranism for the Greek communion, and was baptized by the name of Peter Fedorovitch, preparatory to being proclaimed Grand Duke of Russia and heir presumptive. Scarcely had this distinction been conferred upon the young titular head of a paltry state, when deputies arrived from Stockholm, to inform him of his election by the senate to the throne of that kingdom — an honour which he had to decline with thanks, having entertained other proposals. In fact,

the notification of his election to a monarchy came the very next day after his formal nomination to an empire. Strange fortune for one so unfortunate in the end—to have two crowns offered, and to be deprived of the one chosen by a cruel death after a few months' possession of it! Having surrendered to him the reversion of a mighty realm, Elizabeth whose feeble mind and indolent disposition made her the tool of crafty intriguers, was easily persuaded to regard her nephew more as a rival than an heir; and Peter, who had not received much education, was unpardonably neglected. Jealously excluded from all affairs of state, viewed with distrust, watched by spies, and often very much in want of money, the young prince sought relief from vexation in the company of a body of guards who had attended him from Holstein—a punch-drinking, tobacco-smoking race—with whom he gladly retired from the capital to Oranienbaum, a country-seat overlooking the gulf of Finland, presented to him by his aunt. He grew up entirely a German, idolised Frederick of Prussia, and had no sympathy with anything essentially Russian. One of her ladies ventured to remonstrate with the empress for her neglect; but only extorted the reply, "Johanna, knowest thou the way to Siberia?"

In the third year of his residence in the empire, the Grand Duke was married by the empress to Sophia Augusta, princess of Anhalt Zerbst, who had been brought to St. Petersburg by a wily match-making

mother; and who received the baptismal name of Catherine, on adopting the Greek faith,—a necessary preliminary to the marriage. Never was there a more ill-assorted couple. Peter was ugly; and Catherine beautiful. The husband was dull of understanding and a boor in his manners, ever reeking with the fumes of pipes and beer. The wife was polished, clever, ambitious of literary distinction, and a daring aspirant after power. He was a German, fond of proclaiming his admiration for his own countrymen, and the inferiority of the people he was intended to govern. She, though more a German than himself, had the tact to disguise her nationality, and appear as if an incarnation of the Muscovite spirit. "Bleed me," said she to her surgeon, "that not a drop of German blood may remain in my veins." Contempt for her husband speedily ripened into abhorrence; and being wholly without moral principle, she dishonoured him. A child born ten years after the marriage, in 1754, subsequently the unhappy emperor Paul I., is commonly thought to have been the issue of her connection with Soltikoff, the first of her known paramours. Peter, on his part, withdrew from a domestic circle which had no charms for him; to revel with his Holstein comrades, and openly lived with a mistress, Elizabeth, second daughter of Count Woronzow, after discovering the infidelity of his wife. The result of the mental inferiority of the Grand Duke to the Duchess, along with his political indiscretion in

avowing Germanism, and her political sagacity in affecting Russianism, may readily be conjectured. A conspiracy was formed to deprive him of the throne upon the demise of the empress, and raise Catherine to it as regent during the minority of her son. The prime mover in this plot was the grand chancellor Bestucheff.

At the time when Peter I. left England, a Scotch lieutenant in the army, of the name of Best, entered his service, and accompanied him to Russia. Finding that the word *best* signified *beast* in the Russian language, and was in common use as a term of abuse, he was annoyed by the circumstance, upon which the czar undertook to remove the difficulty. "You shall," said he, "be called Bestucheff; and then you will be as good a Russian as myself." Alexey Bestucheff, the son of this Scotch officer, was for many years the prime minister of Elizabeth, and directed the affairs of the empire both at home and abroad. He was able, bold, unscrupulous, and thoroughly venal. During the reign of the empress Anne, while upon a diplomatic mission, he passed through Kiel, and purloined from the archives, the original records of the alliance between the ducal house of Holstein and the imperial family of St. Petersburg. Under Elizabeth, he had the infamous audacity to procure the assassination of the French ambassador's courier, in order to seize the despatches. His ruling passion was avarice. Frederick of Prussia, in one of

his letters, notes the "chancellor's strong propensity to guineas." He was largely bribed both by Austria and England; and was observed to pay his gambling debts not with Russian coin, but with the ducats of Maria Theresa, and the guineas of George II. There are odd notices of corrupt dealings both with the empress and her ministers in the despatches of Williams, the British ambassador. In 1755 he writes, that "a convention had at length been signed with Russia, the main object of which was aid against France, and co-operation with Austria. Besides the usual diplomatic presents, Bestucheff received 10,000*l.*; and then, cunningly enough, requested that an extraordinary present might be given to Woronzow (vice-chancellor). It is certain," continues he, "that whatever money this court is to receive by the first secret article, goes into the empress's privy purse, and as she is at present building two or three very large palaces, she wants a sum of money to carry on these buildings, and this has greatly contributed to finish the convention so soon." So the gold of England helped to rear the Winter Palace, one of the erections of the reign. "The great chancellor," says Williams, "Bestucheff exerted himself much to our advantage. Great joy appeared in his face when he found his avarice satisfied by the private offers. Woronzow, too, did his best. Would his majesty be pleased to give him something above his ordinary fees, *to buy him a ring:* 500*l.* bestowed in this manner would have a

great effect in carrying on future business in this court." "Bestucheff complains that the empress gives him only 7000 roubles a year, which is not enough to make him independent. If the King of England will give him a pension of 2500*l.*, he will, in future, serve and be wholly devoted to him." The sum was granted. The ambassador further mentions a visit from an agent of Woronzow, who stated, that he had not addressed his master in the proper way; "that the house he was building in this town had been begun with English money; that he had not been able to carry it on for the last five or six years; and that it must be English money that must finish it."

The Grand-Chancellor plotted the ruin of the Grand-Duke, imagining that Peter, as Duke of Holstein, if ever he came to the throne, would not fail to send him to Siberia, for carrying off the archives from Kiel. But he fell himself from power by the very means which he adopted to secure it. Exasperated against the Prussian sovereign, owing to some free remarks upon her mother, and her own mode of life, Elizabeth resolved to join the formidable league of Austria, France, Sweden, and Saxony against Frederick, and engage in the celebrated Seven Years' War. An imperial army accordingly took the field in 1757, under Marshal Apraxin, who invaded Prussia, gained a decisive victory by the force of superior numbers over Marshal Lehwald, and might have reached Berlin,

while the king was occupied in other directions, had a proper use been made of the advantage. But to the astonishment of all parties, he withdrew his troops so precipitately, and made such haste to recross the frontier, that the retreat had the aspect of a disorderly and disgraceful flight. At that time the life of the empress was despaired of; and as Bestucheff wanted the army at home, with Apraxin and some other generals, who were privy to the conspiracy excluding the Grand-Duke from the succession, he sent secret orders to the commander to return with all speed. But Elizabeth recovered, and being obliged to listen to loud complaints from her allies, an inquiry into the extraordinary conduct of the army could not be avoided. The marshal, upon being called to account, justified himself by producing the written order of the minister; subordinate accomplices revealed the whole intrigue; and Bestucheff was thus caught in the snare which he had laid for Peter. He was immediately arrested and banished; and among his papers, a copy of the deed of renunciation was found, which he meant to compel the Grand-Duke to sign. Catherine, who was doubtless cognisant of the plot from the first, upon gaining the throne, recalled the veteran and venal intriguer.

Russia gained no glory from the part she acted in the Seven Years' War. If her armies triumphed, they did so alone by numerical superiority, while the troops

disgraced themselves by insubordination to their own generals, and terrible outrages upon the inhabitants of the territories they visited. Towns, villages, noble seats, and humble cottages were given up to pillage and fire by the Cossacks. They intended, as was said, to leave the subjects of Prussia nothing but air and earth. "We have to deal with barbarians," exclaimed Frederick, "who are digging the grave of humanity." Fortunately for the king, in the hour of his greatest depression, when it seemed scarcely possible to save him from utter ruin by any human combination of events, his inveterate foe, the Empress Elizabeth, expired, December 15. 1761, and was quietly succeeded by his ardent admirer, the Grand-Duke, under the name of Peter III. The latter by immediately concluding an armistice with the heroic sovereign, followed by a peace, and inducing Sweden to do the same, enabled him to cope successfully with his remaining adversaries, and terminate a contest with more than half of Europe, by the return of all parties to the *status quo ante bellum.* The great conflict benefited none of the belligerents except the state which was brought to the verge of annihilation by it, for the fact of Prussia withstanding the attacks of such a confederacy, established for that country a claim for consideration as an equal from the other powers, and changed the titular monarchy into a substantive kingdom.

With all his dissoluteness, oddities, and vulgarity, the third Peter was remarkably humane; and claims respect for many acts of clemency and justice during his brief term of power. He continued nearly all the officers of the government at their posts, though many of them were his personal enemies, and was content with the simple resignation of those whom he dismissed from employment. He recalled the state-prisoners doomed to exile by the jealousy of former governments, with the exception of Bestucheff; and the magnates of past times, Munich and Biren, with Lestocq, re-appeared in the capital. The former, eighty-two years of age, was welcomed by a surviving son, with a train of thirty-two grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The old soldier presented himself to the emperor in the sheep-skin pelisse he had worn in the wilds of Siberia; but he immediately restored to him the badges of the order of St. Andrew, with his rank of field-marshal, saying, "I hope that notwithstanding your advanced age you may still serve me." Munich replied, "Since your majesty has brought me from darkness to light, and called me from the depths of a cavern to the foot of the throne, you will find me ever ready to expose my life in your service. Neither a tedious exile, nor the severity of a Siberian climate have been able to extinguish, or even damp, the ardour I have formerly shown for the interests of Russia and the glory of its monarch." The new emperor also abolished the use of torture, sup-

pressed the terrible secret chancery, reduced the taxes which pressed most heavily upon the poor, and freed the nobles from their ancient dependence upon the crown by authorising them to travel abroad, bear arms or not, at their own discretion.

But in proportion as these measures were beneficent, others were stamped with folly or imprudence, and were fraught with the greatest danger to their author. Peter made himself ridiculous by the importance which he attached to trifles, as hats and spatter-dashes of peculiar shape, while he became obnoxious to almost all around him, by the singular infatuation with which he disparaged Russia, and proclaimed his preferences in favour of foreign manners and customs. With remarkable perversity or incaution, he neglected to celebrate his coronation at Moscow, the old capital of the empire, a practice of high antiquity, popularly regarded as necessary to the due sanction of the sovereign authority. He exasperated the clergy by ordering the images to be removed from the churches, erecting a Lutheran chapel at Oranienbaum for his Holstein soldiers, and proposing to convert ecclesiastical property into imperial domains, out of which the clergy were to receive yearly salaries, corresponding to their stations, the surplus being devoted to secular purposes. Proceedings of this kind roused the entire body of prelates, priests, and monks against him; and he was represented throughout the empire as an alien to the national faith,

in name a member of the Greek communion, but in heart a Lutheran. While offending the church, he provoked the army by introducing the Prussian discipline and uniform, disbanding the imperial guards, substituting foreign cuirassiers in their place at court, and raising his uncle, Prince George of Holstein, an officer of no fame and little experience, to the rank of generalissimo of all his forces. As if to make himself as many enemies as possible, he adopted the foolish project of a war with Denmark, in order to retake from that power the duchy of Scleswick, an ancient appanage of Holstein, thus subordinating the interests of an immense empire to those of his paltry native patrimony. Though there were no actual hostilities, yet troops were marched into Pomerania, and a fleet was collected at Cronstadt and Revel. Peter had good intentions, but was wholly deficient in judgment and discretion, while entirely destitute of that energy of character necessary to execute a purpose in the face of difficulty and opposition.

It is probable that upon her husband rising to the supreme power, Catherine dreaded some expression of his resentment, for which she had given ample cause; but it was signified by no overt act, except the omission of her name in the manifesto which announced his accession to the imperial dignity. He put her in possession of the domains of the late empress; but strangely alternated in his demeanour from slavish respect to

indifference, and even insult — conduct natural to a man of feeble and vacillating mind. It is said to have been his intention to divorce her, marry his mistress Elizabeth Woronzow, and set aside Prince Paul from the succession, declaring him illegitimate. But the clever wife stole a march upon the dull husband; for while he expressed irritation and revolved plans, she surrounded herself with a party bound to attempt his dethronement. The princess Dashkof — an odd compound of the masculine and feminine, the soldier, politician, and blue-stocking — was the soul of the enterprise, the most active and impetuous, if not the most formidable, of the conspirators. While the bosom friend of Catherine, she was the younger sister of Peter's mistress; and he had officiated as her godfather at the baptismal font. The other principal parties engaged were the five ruffianly Orlofs, of whom Gregory, the eldest brother, was now the intimate of Catherine; the archbishop of Novgorod, who was spurred on to action by the projected wholesale spoliation of the church; Razamofsky, hetman of the Cossacks, and commander of the regiment of Ismailof; Volkonsky, a nephew of the fallen Bestucheff, and major-general of the guards; Panin, the governor of the grand-duke Paul; Odart, a supple Italian adventurer, ready to act the part of spy or bravo; and Passik, a brutal drunken lieutenant, who offered to cut down the emperor in the midst of his court.

With consummate duplicity and address Catherine prepared the minds of many for a change, and rendered them eager for it, without admitting them into the secret. To ecclesiastics she bewailed the probable fall of the holy orthodox religion; to senators she pictured the substitution of the *Code Frederick* for the old laws of the empire; to officers of the guards she lamented the impending extinction of the noble corps: to ordinary individuals she bemoaned the hard fate that awaited her, with an innocent boy, perhaps to be imprisoned for life, if not doomed to death; to poor petitioners, she observed with tears, "Would that I had the power to relieve your distress! but alas! I am a cipher!" When the shades of night had gathered, and St. Petersburg was asleep, this artful and hypocritical woman was often at a house on the bank of the Moika canal, the rendezvous of her partisans, among some of the basest and most worthless of men. The great object of the conspirators was to gain a sufficient number of the troops by bribes, though some of them being commanders were sure of their soldiers. Catherine applied by an agent to the French and British ambassadors for a loan; but difficulties being raised, an English merchant advanced her the necessary sum. At first, her adherents were not united in their views, though agreed upon the single point of a revolution. Panin long held out for the proclamation of prince Paul as emperor, with Catherine as regent. But the princess Dashkof consenting to

receive the advances of the pale, old, be-wigged, and be-powdered valetudinarian, he surrendered his scruples to her charms, though his long connection with her mother was notorious, and she herself believed him to be her father. The decision was now unanimous to make Catherine empress.

The plot was ripe in the summer of the year 1762, when Peter had been little more than six months on the throne. He was not unwarned of his danger. The King of Prussia expressly sent him a caution; but he was so free from mistrust as to reply; "In regard to the concern you take in my safety, I beseech you to give yourself no uneasiness. The soldiers call me their father: they say they would rather be governed by a man than a woman. I take my walks about the streets of St. Petersburg. If any one designed to do me harm he would have executed his purpose long ago. But I am continually doing good on all occasions that offer, and I trust in the protection of God alone: with that I have nothing to fear." The British and French ambassadors, well aware that a conspiracy was on foot, though ignorant of the particulars, made representations to the emperor; notes also were addressed to him by his own subjects; but he turned a deaf ear to the intimations. In fact, while a restless activity marked the early period of his government, a morbid supineness distinguished its close. Profoundly unconscious that his throne was in peril, he left St. Petersburg, never

to see it again, for his country seat, Oranienbaum, thirty miles distant. Catherine retired to Peterhof, a little nearer the capital, in the same direction, where the festivities usual on the feast of St. Peter and Paul were to be celebrated, at which time the insurrection was to take place. But an unexpected incident precipitated the movement. A soldier in the confidence of the ferocious Passik incautiously put a question to a superior officer, relative to the conspiracy, thinking him a party to it; and by guarded inquiries, the main facts were elicited from him. Passik was at once arrested.

It was nine o'clock in the evening of July 8. (19. N. S.) when the arrest took place. The conspirator found opportunity to write upon a scrap of paper, "Proceed to execution this instant, or we are undone;" and despatched the missive to his accomplices by a chance passer-by. Thus alarmed, the resolve to act immediately was unanimously adopted; and while Gregory Orlof remained to secure the troops in their barracks, his next brother, Alexis, was despatched to bring Catherine from Peterhof. She was not in the palace, but occupied the low Dutch-built summer-house in the grounds, called Montplaisir, close to the waters of the Gulf of Finland. This was to facilitate communication with her friends; and a boat was moored on the beach in case a flight to Finland should be necessary. At two o'clock she was aroused from sleep by the entrance of a soldier into her apartment, saying, "Your majesty

has not a moment to lose, get ready to follow me." She dressed herself in haste; and followed her visitor through the park, to a gate where a carriage awaited her. It was driven so rapidly that the horses fell down exhausted, while the distance was yet considerable from the capital. In this emergency, the cart of a peasant appeared; and having mounted it, Catherine entered St. Petersburg in undignified style at seven o'clock on the morning of the 9th. Being at once conveyed to the barracks of the bribed troops, attended by Gregory Orlof, the hetman Razamofsky, Panin, and the other confederates, she told a tale of woe to the soldiers with a faltering voice; that danger had driven her to the necessity of coming to ask their assistance; that the czar had intended to put her to death that very night, together with her son; that she had no other means of escaping death than by flight; and that confiding in their generous disposition she placed herself under their protection. This atrocious falsehood being believed, company after company openly declared for her, till a force was banded on the side of the insurrection sufficient to overawe the hesitating or the hostile. In three hours, her friends were in possession of all the arsenals, and commanded the whole city. It was rapidly put in a state of defence, by planting cannon, and stationing guards in the principal streets, and at the outlets to the country. Soon after ten o'clock the extraordinary revolution was sanctified in the view of the people by

the approval of the church; and the new empress took the style of Catherine II., receiving the imperial diadem from the archbishop of Novgorod, in the church of Our Lady of Kazan. She then took possession of the palace, issued a manifesto to the people, notified her accession to the foreign ministers, held a council, and visited the troops on horseback accompanied by the princess Dashkof. Both were habited in the uniform of the guards, carried drawn swords, and were crowned with oaken wreaths. It was at this time that Catherine noticed Potemkin, an obscure ensign in the ranks, afterwards the virtual master of the empire. By the evening, having secured the capital, she was ready to march against her husband, and set out at the head of her troops.

It is remarkable that all was over in the city, while Peter knew no more of the event than the fish in the Gulf of Finland. Early in the day, the conspirators secured the roads leading to Peterhof and Oranienbaum, for the purpose of preventing the transmission of intelligence. But Bressan, a faithful friend of the emperor, sent him a note by a messenger, who succeeded in passing the Kalinka bridge while the troops were in the act of occupying it. According to previous arrangement, Peter left Oranienbaum in the morning, with his mistress, some courtly and military attendants, expecting to find Catherine at Peterhof. On the road her chamberlain was encountered, coming in breathless

haste to inform him of her disappearance. Proceeding at a rapid pace to her residence, he ransacked Montplaisir, searched the cupboards, looked under the beds, and asked a thousand questions relative to the absconded, but nothing was known by any one beyond the bare fact of her escape. Though strongly agitated, he did not comprehend the nature of the event, while many around him, with greater penetration, surmised its political meaning. The court scattered in small groups over the grounds, sad and silent, a gloomy suspicion filling every mind. The servants were the first to hear of the change at St. Petersburg, a rumour of which had been brought by some peasants. It was whispered about among the courtiers, but withheld from their master. Bressan's messenger at last arrived with the note. It stated, that the troops had that morning revolted in favour of Catherine, who was then about to be crowned in the Kazan Cathedral. Further intelligence speedily removed all doubt respecting the reality of the revolution. The women wept; the frivolous courtiers had only vague suggestions to offer; and Peter, from having been voluble, became completely taciturn. He was seen strolling alone with great strides along the walks in the park; and ordered his dinner to be served up at the sea-side. It was the last time he dined as emperor.

The situation of the czar was critical, but by no means desperate; and a man of energy might have

recovered the ground taken from him. He had three thousand Holsteiners encamped in the neighbourhood; an army in Pomerania for the Danish war; a fleet equipped for the same object at Cronstadt and Revel; while many in St. Petersburg had yielded to the transient excitement of brandy, or been overborne by the force of circumstances. Fortune favoured him still further, for old Munich, brave and wise, made his appearance at Peterhof. It was his advice to march at once to the capital, with whatever force could be collected; and trust for success to a bold demeanour, with support from the troops and citizens who had been coerced or temporarily seduced. But Peter was not the man to adopt an energetic course. "Well," said the marshal, "if you wish to avoid a battle with the rebels, it is not advisable for you, at any rate, to stay to be attacked by them here, where you have no means of defending yourself to advantage. Neither Peterhof nor Oranienbaum is in a condition to sustain a siege. But Cronstadt offers you a safe retreat. It is still under your command. You have there a formidable fleet and a numerous garrison. It is in fact from Cronstadt that you will find it an easy matter to bring St. Petersburg back to its duty." This counsel was unanimously approved; but unfortunately, when every minute was precious, instead of instantly starting in person, Peter sent off an adjutant to take the command, and prepare for his coming. Scarcely had this officer

reached Cronstadt, when one of Catherine's emissaries arrived, who out-manœuvred him; and induced the garrison by false representations and presents to declare for the empress.

In the evening two yachts conveyed the czar and his terrified court, with aide-de-camp Gudovitch and Munich, across the channel between Peterhof and Cronstadt. On casting anchor in the harbour a sentinel cried out, "Who comes there?" "The emperor" was the reply. "There is no emperor," returned the sentinel. Hearing this, Peter started forward, and throwing back his cloak to show his badges, exclaimed, "What! do you not know me?" "No," shouted a hundred voices at once, "we know of no emperor. Long live the empress Catherine." The commander had lined the shore with the garrison; and threatened to sink the yachts with his cannon if they did not instantly retire. So near were they to the landing-place, that Gudovitch, taking his master by the hand, said, "Let us leap on shore: none will dare to fire upon you; and Cronstadt will still belong to your majesty." Munich seconded this advice, but in vain. Peter had no heart for such an adventure; and hastily ran down into the cabin to join the frightened women. The crews, not waiting to raise the anchors, cut the cables, and took the yachts off by the use of their oars.

When at some distance from the port, the rowers

ceased their toil, and the vessels stayed their course till the question of his future movements was determined by the czar. It was a fine summer night, the sea was calm, the sky unclouded, and that bright twilight prevailed common to the summer nights of the latitude. Munich and Gudovitch sat upon the deck, sad, silent, and thoughtful, while the steersman went below to learn the pleasure of the emperor. Munich was sent for. "Field-Marshal," said Peter, "I perceive that I was too late in following your advice; but you see to what extremities I am reduced. You, who have escaped from so many dangers, tell me, I beseech you, what I ought to do."—"Proceed immediately to join the squadron at Revel," said Munich; "there take a ship, go on to Pomerania, put yourself at the head of your army, return to Russia, and I promise you, that in six weeks Petersburg and all the rest of the empire will be in subjection to you." But the women and courtiers clamorously interposed, saying, that the rowers would never be able to bring them to Revel, "Well then," replied Munich, "we will all row with them." After remaining for some time in a state of miserable irresolution, Peter ordered the pilot to make for Oranienbaum, where he disembarked at four o'clock in the morning of July the 10th.

While the emperor was thus wandering, the empress was taking a few hours' repose at Krasnoë-kabac, the "red public-house," on the road between St. Peters-

burg and Peterhof, surrounded by her army. Early in the morning, she advanced to the monastery of St. Sergius near Strelna, where a humble letter from Peter was received, to which no answer was returned. A second came while on her route, in which he offered to resign the crown, asked for a pension, and signified his wish to retire to Holstein. But Catherine wanted to secure his person; and having corrupted the messenger, who was in his confidence, she succeeded in inducing him voluntarily to surrender. No words are strong enough to express the feebleness of the man, or the infamy of the woman. While Catherine proceeded to Peterhof in the state of a sovereign, Peter took the road thither to find himself a prisoner. Having been led up the grand staircase of the palace, he was stript of the marks of his order, had his pockets ransacked, and was deprived of his clothes. After remaining some time barefooted in his shirt, the soldiery threw an old morning gown over his shoulders, and shut him up under guard in a room, where he was compelled to sign an act of abdication, and sent off the same evening under a strong escort to the chateau of Ropscha. The next day, the 11th, the empress held a court, and received the homage of many who had not hitherto paid it. Among others, old Munich presented himself; and upon perceiving him, she observed, "Field-Marshal, it was you then who wanted to fight me?" "Yes, madam," he responded in a manly tone, "could I do

less for the prince who delivered me from captivity? But it is henceforth my duty to fight for you; and you will find in me a fidelity equal to that with which I had devoted my services to him." In the afternoon, she returned to St. Petersburg, and entered it in triumph, the whole army being bedecked with wreaths of oak.

By a manifesto addressed to the empire, Catherine made known the motives which induced her to assume the reins of government, solemnly averring that she never had design or desire to arrive at power, but referred her position to the good pleasure of the Almighty. Her husband's offences are elaborately detailed in this production. It is alleged against him, that he had not declared prince Paul his successor, for which a very sufficient reason might be assigned. He had also been indiscreetly elated at the death of his aunt, the empress Elizabeth; had "despised the laws of the empire, and her most respectable tribunals;" had so altered the uniform of the army, that in the heat of battle, the soldiers might exchange blows and shots, mistaking each other for the enemy; and "in a word, the least traces of honour were not to be perceived in him." But his "want of zeal towards God," endeavouring to "stifle in the faithful the fear of God," is the capital crime. "Having effaced from his heart even the least traces of the holy orthodox religion, he began first by rooting out this true religion, established so long in

Russia, by absenting himself from the house of God, and from prayers." Far as this effrontery goes, it went still further, for the document abounds with the phrases, "our country," "our dear country," "our *native* country," as if all parties had forgotten that Catherine was a princess of Anhalt Zerbst, a subject of Prussia, born in the corn-exporting town of Stettin.

It was necessary for the empress to reward the instruments of her ambition, but impossible to do so in accordance with their expectations. The bestowment of places and titles was readily adjusted; but money, the article most in demand, was scarce, and credit low. The loan obtained to effect the revolution had all been squandered; and was far from supplying the necessary means of corruption, for Catherine, with the more eager of her adherents, had to convert their disposable effects into cash. In this state of the finances, crown lands were granted to twenty-four officers of the guards, who also rose in rank; serfs were substituted for roubles in the pay of others; and the common soldiers had to be content with imperial condescensions, added to a little more brandy and beer. Panin was made prime minister. All the Orlofs received the title of count. Gregory Orlof, the favourite, was appointed lieutenant-general of the Russian armies, and Knight of St. Alexander Nevsky. He outwitted his accomplices, for not one of them had any idea of his relation to the sovereign, till she was on the throne. The chiefs were

therefore not a little chagrined to find, that a man whom they considered beneath them, had been raised by their means to a dominant position. But in a very brief interval, the exultation of the whole party was moderated, and anxiety awakened by expressions of public feeling. Moscow was silent upon receiving tidings of the revolution, and neither citizens nor soldiers raised a single shout, when the governor proclaimed the empress. In St. Petersburg, some of the regiments reflected with shame upon the part they had acted, and murmured at their commanders for exciting them to insurrection. Soldiers and sailors reproached each other for having sold their master for a glass of grog, and the people, forgetful of the faults and follies of the monarch, thought with sorrow upon the sad reverse of fortune that had befallen him. This popular ferment, however natural, was unfortunate, for it precipitated the pre-determined fate of Peter, as unquestionably his death was certain from the moment that his person was secured.

For six days, the captive remained in the château of Ropscha perfectly unsuspicious of real peril. He calculated upon a short detention, and a free passage to Holstein. On the seventh day, July 17., Count Alexis Orlof arrived, and with him came Teplof, a natural son of the archbishop of Novgorod, both ready to execute any dark and desperate deed. Orlof was of tall stature, and the most physically powerful man in the empire.

He could bend a nail into a ring around his finger, and therefore throttle with ease the timid prisoner he visited. There was the usual guard in attendance under the command of the brothers Baratinsky. Pretending to come with news of his speedy deliverance, the two miscreants asked permission to dine with the dethroned czar, in order to converse with freedom respecting the event. Before dinner, according to national usage, glasses and brandy were brought in, and while Teplof engaged in discourse, Orlof filled the glasses, and poured a poisonous mixture into the one intended for the victim. He drank it without distrust, but was presently seized with excruciating pains. A second glass being offered, as if to relieve him, he rejected the potion, and suspecting the truth, addressed reproaches to the ruffians, at the same time calling aloud for some milk. The poison was still pressed upon him, a scuffle ensued, and a valet, much attached to his master, ran into the room. Peter threw himself into his arms, exclaiming, "It was not then enough to prevent my reign in Sweden, and deprive me of the Russian crown, but they will have my life also." But this dangerous witness was forced out of the apartment, and the scuffle continuing, the younger of the Baratinsky's came in to aid the murderers. Peter was then upon his back grappling for his life with Orlof, who pressed one knee upon his breast, and with one hand clenched his throat. The two confederates, taking the imperial

scarf, drew it round his neck, and the unhappy emperor expired.

Mounting his horse, Orlof galloped off to the capital, to inform Catherine that her husband was no more; and she was quickly in council with a few advisers, debating the points, when to reveal the death, and how to conceal the murder? It was decided not to divulge the event till the next day; and the empress kept her court in the evening with her usual gaiety. As if ignorant of the occurrence, it was announced in form to her on the 18th, while at table; and the widow instantly withdrew overwhelmed with fictitious grief, while the company of courtiers and foreign ministers broke up in confusion. She kept to her apartment for several days to indulge her sorrow, while public declaration was made of the decease of Peter. Never was a great crime covered by a thinner veil. On the 20th, Keith, the British ambassador, wrote home, as follows: "I received from the Russian minister a paper of the following tenor. 'The imperial ministry of Russia think themselves obliged to inform the foreign ministers that the *ci-devant* emperor having had a *violent colic*, with which he was frequently incommoded, died yesterday.'" An imperial manifesto had previously appeared, notifying the incident to the nation: "By the grace of God, Catherine II., empress and autocratrix of all the Russias, to all our loving subjects, &c., greeting; The seventh day after our accession to the imperial throne, we received intelligence that the late emperor

was attacked by a most violent *colic*, occasioned by the hemorrhoids, of which he had suffered frequent returns. That therefore we ought not to be wanting in Christian duty, nor disobedient to the divine command, by which we are enjoined to preserve the life of our neighbour, we immediately ordered that the said Peter should be furnished with everything that might be judged necessary to prevent the dangerous consequences of that fearful complaint, and to restore his health by the aids of medicine. But, to our great regret and affliction, we were yesterday evening apprised that by the permission of the Almighty, the late emperor departed this life. We have therefore ordered his body to be conveyed to the monastery of Nevsky, in order to its interment in that place. At the same time, with our imperial and maternal voice, we exhort our faithful subjects to forgive and forget what is past, to pay the last duties to his body, and to pray to God sincerely for the repose of his soul; willing them, however, to consider this unexpected and sudden death as an especial effect of the providence of God, whose impenetrable decrees are working for us, for our throne, and for our country, things known only to his holy will. — Done at St. Petersburg, July $\frac{7}{18}$ 1762."

The body of the murdered emperor was conveyed to the capital, and exposed for three days in the church of St. Alexander Nevsky, in order that the people might pay the customary mark of respect to a deceased prince,

by kissing the hand or the mouth. Care was taken that Peter should appear, in death as in life, in his Holstein uniform. It is said that the face betrayed evidence of strangulation; and that those who ventured to salute the mouth had swollen lips from the virulence of the poison. Though the exhibition of the body must have led to popular suspicions respecting violent dealing, the non-observance of an ancient ceremony would have originated exactly the same surmisings, or the people would have clung to the idea that the reported death of the emperor was only a feint. Hence Catherine and her friends, who cared not a rush for public opinion in itself, deemed it far preferable policy to hazard an inculpatory verdict, rather than risk the insurrections which would infallibly have broken out, had any persuasion become prevalent that the czar was still alive. After the exhibition, the corpse was interred with little ceremony before the rails of the altar, and not in the royal mausoleum within the fortress, the empress having no wish, whenever her own doom came, to share the grave of her husband. As if nothing should be wanting to complete the audacious hypocrisy connected with this great crime, a notification was published by the senate, that out of regard to her health, she could not appear at the obsequies, having taken the event so much to heart, that she was continually dissolved in tears! Thirty-four years afterwards, when summoned to her judgment, Peter was raised from his

obscure grave by the orders of the emperor Paul, who detested his mother, and the two bodies were placed side by side in the Winter Palace. A crown was put upon the coffin of the murdered czar, as he had neglected the ceremony of coronation; and the people who were admitted to the strange spectacle, were required to make a solemn genuflexion before it, and retire backwards. The bodies were then conveyed in state to the imperial sepulchre, while Alexis Orlof, then living at Moscow, was summoned to St. Petersburg, and compelled to walk in the funeral procession behind the remains of the man he had poisoned and throttled.

It ought to be mentioned, that the very acts for which this ill-fated monarch was most severely condemned, were ratified in the new reign. Peter made peace with Frederick of Prussia — one of his most unpopular measures — and Catherine confirmed it. Peter was denounced as a very heathen for seizing the property of the church: Catherine, after a little manœuvring, laid her hand upon the spoil, defying the whole army of monks, nuns, priests, and prelates. Peter was declared in a state document unworthy of the throne because of his irreligion: Catherine, who avowed herself shocked by his peccadilloes, illustrated her attachment to the holy orthodox religion of the empire by unexampled profligacy, besides being the friendly correspondent of the infidels, Voltaire, Diderot, and D'Alembert, to the last of whom she wished to entrust the education of her

son. Sovereigns, while notoriously immoral, have generally sought to conceal their vices from public observation. But Catherine, disdaining sexual responsibility, proclaimed her viciousness; and afforded the first instance, in ancient or modern times, of gazetted royal prostitution, making the post of paramour as openly an office in her court as that of minister of police or secretary of state.

CHAP. XIV.

PROGRESS OF RUSSIA IN ASIA.

EASTWARD EXTENSION OF THE EMPIRE. — FOUNDATION OF YAKUTSK. — THE RUSSIANS ON THE AMOUR. — EMBASSY TO PEKIN. — RUPTURE BETWEEN RUSSIA AND CHINA. — TREATY OF NERSHINSK. — RUSSIANS EXCLUDED FROM CHINA. — TREATY OF KIAKHTA. — FRONTIER TOWNS. — NORTHERN SIBERIA. — KAMSCHATKA. — RELATIVE POSITION OF ASIA AND AMERICA. — VOYAGES OF BEHRING. — THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS. — BARBARITY OF THE FUR TRADERS. — VOYAGES TO JAPAN. — TRAVELLERS. — NEW SIBERIA. — BILLINGS. — RUSSIAN AMERICA.

THE house of Romanoff had now been a century and a half upon the throne. During this interval, the empire was extended through the whole breadth of Asia from the Urals to Behring's strait, and from the frontiers of China to the Arctic Ocean. Military and fur-trading stations, consisting of a few wooden huts around an ostrog or fort, were planted on the banks of the Yenesei, Lena, and Kolyma, and on the shore of the North Pacific, which grew up into small towns, with a population recruited by exiles. Verst-posts appeared at various points marking a greater distance from the capitals than from the centre of the globe. The

detachment of Northern Asia from America was ascertained; voyages were made from the peninsula of Kamschatka to the new continent; and a Russian America dawned. The Kurile islands were reached, then Japan, and two Japanese appeared among the mongrel crowds of St. Petersburg. The mineral wealth of Siberia was discovered; and the boundary-line between the empires of Russia and China was arranged, while diplomatic embassies and commercial caravans passed the great wall from Moscow to Pekin. Incidental notices of these events as they occurred have been intentionally omitted, in order to give a consecutive view of this wonderful extension of territory and influence, which, though necessarily brief, will be more definite than scattered details. Though rapidly effected, it was the fruit of desultory movements, not of systematic action; and was accomplished much more by stealthy occupation than open force. Armies were not engaged in reducing this enormous tract of country, but private hunters after the fur animals, merchants, and small auxiliary bands of Cossacks. They presented themselves in general at first as traders to the spare indigenous population, and were received with hospitality, till having entrenched themselves, the guests assumed the attitude of masters. Though some tribes submitted only to the sword, after making a brave resistance, the majority, consisting of feeble barbarians, few in number, separated by dreary distances, were

readily mastered by the superior address and skill of the European adventurers.

It was long remembered in the local chronicles of Yakutsk, how a site was obtained for the four wooden towers and palisades of a fort by the first settlers. Though the tale is exactly similar to the one told respecting the foundation of Carthage, it is hardly likely to have been copied from it in the heart of Siberia, but probably refers to something which actually took place. The Yakuts granted so much land for the erection as their visitors could compass with a few cow-hides, upon which, they shrewdly cut the hides into very thin thongs, and surrounded with them an area sufficient for a town as well as a fort. However easy to overcome the natives, strangers to fire-arms and European modes of warfare, the task of exploring and occupying a vast region like Northern Asia, crossing immense rivers and compassing mighty lakes, passing sterile mountains and barren steppes, contending with the severities of nature and encountering savage races, required immense energy. It strikingly illustrates the boldness, vigour, and patient endurance of the Russian colonists, with the invincible temptation of valuable commercial commodities to perilous adventure.

In 1639, sixty years after the invasion of Western Siberia*, while the first Romanoff was reigning, his

* See p. 95.

subjects are said to have caught sight of the Eastern Ocean; and the great river Amour was also heard of. Four years later, in 1643, Pojarkof left Yakutsk, then recently built on the banks of the Lena, in search of the southern stream, at the head of a party of 130 men. The inhabitants, not suspecting hostile intentions, received the strangers hospitably, but becoming insolent in their demands, they ceased to supply them with provisions, and many of the Russians perished of sheer want. Persisting in his undertaking, Pojarkof gained the river, and followed its course to the sea. He then journeyed northward along the coast, and returned by a very different route to the point from whence he started, after an absence of three years. In consequence of the favourable report made by the leader of this expedition, a stronger party was despatched to take possession of the country on the Amour. No difficulty was experienced in reducing a few Tungusian hordes; and a chain of small forts was built along the river, the principal of which were Albasin and Kamarskoi Ostrog.

The Russians now came into contact with the Chinese as neighbours. By the latter, the district was called the province of the Dauri or "borderers;" and with the Chinese, a commercial treaty was sought as the furs of Siberia were highly valued in the Celestial Empire. An attempt to effect this object was made by Baikov, the son of a boyar of Tobolsk, under authority

of the czar Alexis, who was sent to Pekin at the head of an embassy in 1655, and reached that city with a caravan of Russian and Bokharian merchants. The selection of the envoy was most unfortunate. He was a sturdy impracticable Cossack, and after a residence of six months in the capital, it appears from fragments of his journal, that "neither himself nor his people could tell whether it was great or small," having been confined the whole time to the house appointed for their residence. This was owing entirely to his consequential airs. He was out of humour because only ten courtiers had been sent to meet him, who only advanced half a verst from the walls. He would not alight from his horse on entering the city, nor bend the knee on passing the palace of the emperor, for he maintained that he never saluted his own czar except in his presence, and then only by taking off his hat. He took offence also at the tea which was offered him as a cup of welcome, for as it happened to be the great fast of the Russian Church, the Chinese had made it sinfully, with milk and butter, as if to insult him. Nothing could persuade Baikov to give up the presents brought for the emperor till he had delivered his master's letter, and he insisted upon presenting the letter with his own hand, while obstinately refusing to qualify himself for an audience by learning the usual signs of homage. Envoy, letter, and presents were therefore sent back to the frontier, with the mild rebuke, that "conduct

such as his gave proof of little understanding; and although he styled himself the czar's envoy, he wanted the capacity required for that honourable office." Baikov correctly relates in his journal, that the Mantchoo dynasty began thirteen years before the date of his embassy, or about the year 1642. To the last Chinese ruler he gives the name of Daba; and states that at the Mantchoo invasion this prince went out of his mind, but that his son endeavoured to defend his rights. In 1661, Pokhabov, a Cossack, commenced a settlement upon the site of the present Irkutsk; and twenty years later, 1681, Abbot Feodosyi, with a few monks from Moscow, founded the existing monastery of the Trinity on the farther side of lake Baikal.

The interests of the two empires speedily clashed in the valley of the Amour. The Russians being overbearing to the natives, they applied to the court of Pekin for protection; and the Chinese government, not liking the encroachment upon the "borderers," sent an army with fifteen European cannons to their assistance. The consequence was that Albasin was burnt to the ground by this superior force in 1684, the garrison being allowed to withdraw uninjured to Nershinsk. In the following year, though contrary to engagement, the Russians returned, and posted 1500 men upon the spot. But the Chinese, equally obstinate, reappeared in greater numbers, compelled them by famine to surrender; and many of the prisoners were sent off as

hostages to Pekin. The first Russian church in the city was built for the accommodation of these captives, and the place appointed for their habitation was called the Russian street. In fact, they were so kindly received, that upon peace being concluded, they refused to return to their native country, and intermarrying with Chinese women, their descendants abandoned the language and religion of their fathers. To terminate the open rupture between the empires, Golovin was despatched as ambassador from Moscow late in the year 1685, accompanied by a large body of troops, both to secure his person and ensure respect to the embassy. But owing to the difficulty of procuring subsistence for any considerable number of men in the desolate regions to be traversed, the ruggedness of the roads, and the length of the march, nearly two years elapsed before he passed Irkutsk, and arrived at the frontier station of Selenginsk, to the south of the Baikal. From this place messengers were despatched with overtures of peace to the Chinese government, but two years more expired before any response was made to the application.

Ambassadors from Pekin at length presented themselves, but they were accompanied by such a numerous army, and formidable train of artillery, that the negotiations were concluded almost upon their own terms. The conferences were held under tents in an open plain near the town of Nershinsk, where a treaty was

signed and sealed. When it was proposed to ratify it by oath, the Chinese, who were accompanied by European Jesuits, offered to swear upon a crucifix; but Golovin preferred an oath taken in the name of their own gods. This treaty, while it arrested the progress of the Russian arms in the direction of China, laid the foundation of an important and regular commerce between the two empires. By the first and second articles, they lost the entire valley of the Amour, and did not regain access to it till the reign of Nicholas was drawing to a close. But, by the fifth article, reciprocal liberty of trade was granted to all subjects on both sides, who were provided with passports from their respective courts. The treaty was signed on the 27th of August 1689, under the reign of Ivan and Peter I. With the view of enlarging an advantageous commerce, Peter sent Isbrant Ives, a Dutchman in his service, to Pekin, in 1692, who obtained the same liberty of trade for caravans which had recently been granted to individuals. He performed the journey from Moscow in nineteen months, but returned by a nearer route in little more than ten months. During the reign of Peter, the mines of Nershinsk were opened, rich in silver, lead, tin, and zinc, which have since been made the head-quarters of the great Siberian penal settlement, to which criminals of the worst class are sent. To compose some differences, another mission was despatched to China in 1719, which John Bell of An-

termony attended in a medical capacity, when the czar sent some specimens of his own turnery as a present to the emperor Kam-hi. But the misconduct of the Russian traders, who were drunken and riotous, with other causes of complaint, led the Chinese government to issue an order in 1722 for their total expulsion from the empire, which was rigorously enforced.

Intercourse ceased between the two nations till the year 1727, when under Catherine I. a new treaty was negotiated by Count Ragusinski and three Chinese plenipotentiaries. By its terms, a caravan was allowed to go to Pekin every three years, on condition that it did not consist of more than 200 persons; and notice was to be sent to the Chinese government upon their arrival at the frontiers, in order that an officer might be despatched to conduct them to the capital. Permission was also obtained for four Russian priests to reside at Pekin for the celebration of divine service; and the same favour was extended to some Russian scholars for the purpose of learning the Chinese language. But the privilege of trading within the empire was now withdrawn from private persons; and two places were appointed on the frontier where their merchandise was to be exposed for sale. This treaty is the basis of all transactions subsequently carried on between Russia and China. But since the year 1755, the custom of sending caravans belonging to the crown to Pekin has been discontinued; and the entire com-

merce of the two nations conducted at the appointed frontier stations. One of these, which has become by far the most important, was fixed at the spot where the treaty was negotiated. Here, in a romantic valley, surrounded by high mountains, intersected by the brook Kiakhta, the Russian town of that name arose, 5514 versts from Moscow, and 1532 from Pekin. At less than a quarter of a mile distance, the Chinese founded the settlement of Maimachen, or the "fortress of commerce;" and midway between the two places a wooden barricade marks the common boundary line.

The progress of the Russians was as rapid in northern as in southern Siberia. From Yakutsk on the Lena, they passed to the Kolyma, and erected the first fort upon its banks in 1644. Two years later, a company of adventurers descended that river to the Arctic Ocean; and followed the coast eastward to a bay of the Tchouktski, from whom a supply of walrus teeth was obtained in exchange for trifles, sufficient to tempt another visit and further exploration. Led on by the grand attraction of furs and peltry, aptly called the Golden Fleece of the North, the banks of the Anadir were reached in 1650 by Deshniew and Staduchin, two bold Cossacks, at the head of distinct parties, who established the fort of Anadirsk on the river, and treated the natives with the greatest barbarity. In 1696, the first expedition to Kamschatka started from this fort. It consisted of sixteen Cossacks, who plun-

dered the villages under the pretence of exacting tribute; and carried off some writings in an unknown language, afterwards ascertained to be Japanese. A larger body of invaders in the following year, took possession of the river of Kamschatka by erecting a cross upon its banks; and in 1711 the whole peninsula was reduced, while Bolcheresk, with the Upper and Lower Kamschatkoi forts, were built to secure it. For some years, this acquisition was of little advantage, as only a very scanty tribute of furs could be exacted from the small population. But upon the Russian fur trade being extended to America, the peninsula became of great importance, as a point of communication between the Asiatic and American main land; and the recently dismantled Petropaulovski was founded to facilitate the commerce. It is to be regretted that the accounts of these early enterprises are meagre and obscure, for they must have involved many a romantic incident and perilous adventure, which the imagination is left to supply. It is stated, that the Russians were at first treated by the more northern tribes with great veneration, and almost deified, nor did they believe it possible to hurt them by human power, until the strangers quarrelled among themselves, and blood was seen to flow from the wounds which they gave each other. They seem to have only encountered vigorous resistance from the Tchouktski, a warlike nation inhabiting the north-east extremity of the con-

tinent, who faced the Cossacks with intrepidity, sometimes defeating them, and when overcome themselves, killed one another to avoid captivity. It was found impossible to conquer this race, though their country was repeatedly penetrated; and they have remained to the present day practically independent. The first influence of the new masters upon the native tribes was of an unhappy kind, like that of the Europeans upon the Aborigines of the new world. Doomed to hunt and fish for the benefit of others, while subject to gross ill-usage, they diminished in number, and were deteriorated in spirit.

On advancing towards the north-eastern extremity of Asia, a great country beyond the sea was heard of, which might be seen in clear weather from an island in the intervening channel — a reference to America; and some men were met with who differed from the indigenous people, having "holes pierced in their lips, through which were stuck pieces of the teeth of the sea-horse" — Esquimaux from the adjoining continent. But not content with vague rumours, Peter I. determined to have the problem solved of the relative position of Asia and America. In almost his last moments, he wrote instructions for a voyage as follows: 1. To construct at Kamschatka, or other commodious place on the eastern ocean, one or two vessels. 2. With them to examine the coasts towards the north and towards the east, to see whether they were not

contiguous with America, since their end was not known. 3. To see whether there was any harbour belonging to Europeans in those parts; to keep an exact journal of all that should be discovered, with which the commander was to return to St. Petersburg. Behring, a Dane by birth, but a commodore in the navy of the czar, was intrusted with this mission; and Tshirikof, a Russian officer, was appointed second in command.

As the vast distance from St. Petersburg to the remotest Siberian ports had to be traversed by the officers, mariners, shipwrights, and other artificers, who had then to construct vessels, more than three years elapsed after the instructions were given before the expedition was equipped. It sailed from the river of Kamschatka July 14. 1728. The commander ascertained on this voyage the separation of Asia from America by passing through the intervening channel; and posterity has justly imposed upon it the name of Behring's Strait. But either from unfavourable weather, or keeping close to the Asiatic shore, he never caught sight of the American coast. This was reserved for Krupishef, a Cossack, who sailed from Kamschatka, in order to co-operate with a land expedition into the country of the Tchouktski. "A gale of wind forced him from the point of land at which Behring's voyage had terminated. He steered towards the east, and found, first an island, and afterwards a country of great

extent. As soon as they had sight of this land, a man came to them in a canoe like to those of the Greenlanders. They could only understand from him that he was an inhabitant of a large country where there were many animals and forests. The Russians followed the coast of this land two whole days without being able to approach it, when a storm came on, and they returned to Kamschatka." This completed the discovery of the strait by observation of both sides of the channel; and the fact of the proximity of the continents was added to that of their separation. Upwards of ten years later, in 1741, Behring was commissioned to undertake another voyage, during which he reached the continent of America. The appearance of the land was grand but gloomy. Mountains of great elevation were discerned covered with snow, to the highest of which, Steller, the German naturalist, who accompanied the expedition, gave the name of Mount of St. Elias, which it still retains. On the homeward route, the ship was wrecked on a solitary island; and Behring died there in the subsequent winter, while the crew suffered horribly from the scurvy. The survivors returned to Kamschatka the next year in a vessel constructed out of the timbers of the wreck.

The ill-fated voyage is important as it ultimately gave birth to a Russian-America. Learning from the returned crew that the shores they had visited abounded

with foxes, sables, ermines, and sea-otters, the Siberian merchants formed themselves into small trading companies to fit out vessels, and sail in the same track. The sea-otters, or sea-beavers, as the traders called them, from the resemblance of their fur to that of the common-beaver, were eagerly sought after, as their skins always realised a high price from the Chinese. The animals were taken in nets, surprised in caverns, speared while asleep, and hunted in boats till they were worn out. In 1745 the agents of these private companies reached the Aleutian islands, and brought the first tribute of furs from thence to Okhotsk in 1750. To this archipelago, the attention of the governor of Siberia at Tobolsk was directed in 1760, as imperial property included in his government. Upon the stock of fur animals supplied by the islands becoming exhausted, the hunters passed to the adjoining continent; and gradually established those settlements and factories, upon more than 300 leagues of coast, which now constitute the American possessions of the Russian crown, and stretch to the British territories. Great horrors were perpetrated in this Trans-Pacific extension of the empire. The proceedings of one of the first parties to visit the Aleutians being submitted to a court of inquiry in Kamschatka, upon information of some of the men, it came out in evidence, that fifteen of the male islanders had been shot in order to seize their wives; and that the merchant Tsiuproff had

deliberately proposed to poison the other males with a mixture of corrosive sublimate, with the same object in view. Afterwards, to secure the services of the able-bodied, it was the usual practice, upon visiting a new island, to kidnap the children, and hold them as hostages for the due performance of slave labour in hunting and fishing by the unhappy parents. Under oppressions of this kind the Aboriginal race rapidly dwindled, and was nearly extirpated.

Soon after ports had been established on the east coast of Siberia, the attention of the Russians was directed to Japan as a convenient mart for their furs. Shipwreck first made them personally acquainted with the people of that remarkable empire. A Japanese vessel, richly laden with silks, cotton, rice, and pepper, being driven by stress of weather out of its course, was stranded upon the coast of Kamschatka. The crew reached the land, and saved the most valuable part of their cargo. But some Cossacks murdered the whole party except two, and seized the property. The survivors, an old man and a boy, were sent to St. Petersburg, and arrived there in 1732. This called the notice of the government to their country; and in order to ascertain the exact situation of Japan with respect to Siberia, the two officers Spangberg and Walton were directed to sail thither in 1739. They accomplished the mission, and had some intercourse with the inhabitants, till the authorities interfered, and

prohibited personal communication with the ships. During this expedition, the subjects of Russia for the first time crossed the tracks of other Europeans in the Pacific Ocean. Another shipwreck of a Japanese vessel on the Copper island, off the coast of Kamschatka, occurred in the reign of Catherine II., and led to a new attempt so establish commercial dealings. The master and sixteen sailors were saved, and conducted to Irkutsk, where they resided several years, when the former was brought by Professor Laxmann to St. Petersburg. Deeming the opportunity favourable for negociation, the empress sent the strangers back, accompanied with an envoy and presents. But only permission to trade under the same restrictions as the Dutch, or by sending a vessel annually to the harbour of Nangasaky, was obtained from the Japanese government.

The illustration of the Asiatic portion of the empire was zealously prosecuted in the reign of Catherine, by both inland and maritime expeditions at the expense of the government. The Academy of Sciences was charged with the selection of competent men to travel, and drew up instructions for their guidance. They were to examine and report upon the nature of the soil and of the waters, the means of putting the desert places into cultivation, the actual state of agriculture, the most common diseases both of men and cattle, with the methods in use of healing and preventing them, the

breeding of cattle, particularly sheep, and that of bees and silk-worms, the fisheries and the chace, minerals and mineral waters, valuable plants, and the position of places, with miscellaneous points of geography and meteorology. The celebrated six years' journey of Pallas, from 1768 to 1774, with whom Gmelin, Georgi, Falk, Rytschkof, Lepekhin, and Guldenstædt were associated, prosecuting independent inquiries, resulted from this project. But an obscure fur-trader, named Lachow, accomplished more than the learned travellers. In 1770, having occasion to visit the shore of the Arctic Ocean, he saw while there a herd of rein-deer coming from the north over the ice. Guided by the track of the deer he travelled with sledge and dogs over the ice fields nearly fifty miles, till he came to an island, beyond which was another. Having readily obtained the exclusive right of hunting on these islands, he proceeded further in another journey, and discovered the largest in the group, which has since borne his name, and is also called New Siberia. There are few spots more geologically remarkable on the face of the globe. Hills of fossil wood line the shores, while immense tracts, even whole islands, are composed of the tusks and bones of mammoths, rhinoceroses, and other extinct pachyderms, rolled in sand, gravel or alluvial earth, cemented by ice. These "Adamitic things," or "things of Adam's time," as the uneducated hunters call the remains, in allusion to their antediluvian origin, mys-

teriously fill the frozen soil of continental Siberia, but in much less quantity. Since the discovery, the search for ivory has been added to the quest for furs.

To define the north coast of Siberia—an object often attempted, but not yet performed—Billings, an officer who had been with Captain Cook on his last voyage, was employed by the empress in 1787. He descended the Kolyma river to its mouth, and attempted to follow the coast eastward, but soon abandoned the enterprise, owing to difficulties from the ice. Being subsequently appointed to survey the country of the Tchouktski, he was equally unsuccessful. That bold and independent people closely watched the movements of the exploring party. Not relishing "a chiel among them taking notes," they would not allow their visitors to write any observations, and took away their measuring lines. Water and fuel for cooking they supplied, but required immediate payment, while taking a fancy to the buttons on their coats, they cut them off without ceremony. In 1790 Billings visited the Aleutian archipelago, and has the merit of having revealed to the government the abominable cruelty with which the natives were treated by the Russian traders. But his representations had little or no effect in arresting oppression, owing to remoteness from the seat of authority. A few years afterwards, the Russian-American Company was formed, consisting of merchants chiefly at Irkutsk, who obtained from the Emperor Paul exclusive right to the

peltry of the Aleutian islands and adjacent coasts, a privilege which the Emperor Alexander extended to that of all Russian-America. Under this body, New Archangel, on the southern Sitka island, also called Baronoff island, was founded as the capital. Here reigned for more than a quarter of a century Governor Count Baranoff, answering the commercial expectations of the Company, but otherwise consulting simply his own humour in the administration of affairs, encouraged by the proverb, "God is on high, and the emperor afar off!" He was a burly, choleric, hard-drinking man, a mighty potentate in the eyes of Indians and Aleutian islanders, whom he wheedled out of their furs and skins by potations of hot punch, or compelled them to drudge as slaves for his benefit. Daily brandishing a stout hickory stick for a sceptre, he thwacked his lieutenant-governor, captains, and subalterns, whether matters went right or wrong, according as his own temper was ruffled. Daily also, towards the close of his reign, the hickory sceptre fell from his grasp, when soaked with arrack and rum, a compost which no water ever enfeebled, he tumbled from his throne to the floor. By nature a Sir Anthony Absolute, he was, by distance from the Winter Palace, as absolute as its lord.

CHAP. XV.

TRAGEDY OF THE PRINCESS TARRAKANOF.

DANGER OF CATHERINE. — CRUEL STATE POLICY. — THE RAZAMOFSKYS AND TARRAKANOFS. — PRINCE RADZIVILL. — PRINCESS TARRAKANOF AT ROME. — VISITED BY RIBAS. — HER MARRIAGE WITH ORLOF. — BETRAYAL AT LEGHORN. — DEATH AT ST. PETERSBURG.

THE throne of Catherine II. was so unstable during the early period of her government, that had a resolute competitor of the blood royal appeared in the field, she would inevitably have been compelled to quit it. Moscow sullenly witnessed the pageant of her coronation; the troops were often factious, knowing that their swords alone had borne her to the sovereignty; and the priests industriously sewed the seeds of sedition among the populace, when she disappointed their expectations, keeping in force the obnoxious ukase of her predecessor relative to the ecclesiastical revenues. More than once a new revolution was imminent, and her friends were not without anxiety that she might be doomed to experience the fate of her husband. But the empress maintained an undaunted bearing, without overlooking for a moment the perils that beset her path. "Why,"

said she, to a deputation from the senate, "are you alarmed? Think you that I am afraid to face the danger? or rather, are you afraid that I know not how to overcome it? Recollect that you have seen me, in moments more terrible than these, in full possession of the whole vigour of my mind; and that I can support the most cruel reverses of fortune with as much serenity as I have supported her favours." Catherine spoke the words of sincerity and truth, and had she but combined moral principle with native magnanimity of character, few sovereigns would have appeared to greater advantage on the page of history; but, abandoned completely to the rule of ambitious and voluptuous passions, few have ever surpassed her in selfishness, hypocrisy, and cold-hearted cruelty. Conscious of not having the slightest hereditary right to the crown, she looked sharply after those in whom the blood of the Romanoffs flowed, and deemed the grave the best security against insurrections in their favour. Peter III. was undoubtedly sacrificed to this consideration. Two years later, after the imperial insignia had been trodden underfoot by the mob of Moscow, and thousands in court and city, camp and cloister, had been whispering the name of Ivan, that unfortunate ex-czar met with his violent death in the fortress of Schlusselburg. A third victim to this inhuman policy of state was the Princess Tarrakanof, who perished in the fortress of St. Petersburg. No intrigue was ever blacker with tur-

pitude than the one which brought her within its walls. The commencement of her sad story takes us back to the reign of the Empress Elizabeth.

At the court of Elizabeth no individuals enjoyed higher favour than the two brothers Gregory and Cyril Razamofsky. They were originally young uneducated peasants in the Ukraine, who separately left home in quest of friends and fortune, rose without merit to exalted station at St. Petersburg, and thus illustrated the shameful profligacy with which honours and wealth were squandered. Cyril travelled from his native place to the capital on foot, with a rude kind of güitar for his companion. He was made hetman of the Don Cossacks, commander of the Ismaïlofsky guards, president of the Academy of Sciences, received crown lands having upon them upwards of 40,000 serfs, insinuated himself into the good graces of Peter while grand duke, and was one of the principal conspirators against him. Gregory Razamofsky, the elder brother, who preceded him as a successful adventurer, was made field-marshal and grand-veneur, distinctions which he owed to a profligate intimacy with the empress. This wily man, being aware of that peculiarity in her character which rendered her a strict churchwomen while a voluptuary, bribed her confessor, and some of the high clergy, to represent the propriety of giving to the relation between them the sanction of a private marriage. It was accordingly performed, but never publicly avowed.

Three children were born, two sons and one daughter. One of the sons being placed in the Corps des Mines, met with an accidental death while attending a course of chemistry under Professor Lehmann. Placing on the furnace a vessel filled with poisonous ingredients, he broke it, and was suffocated. The other son, Count Tarrakanof, long survived, and, being a politically harmless man, was unmolested. It was far different with his sister, the youngest of the family, and a mere girl when Catherine II. came to the throne.

Upon that empress trampling under foot the rights of the Poles, and manifesting the design of partitioning the country, Prince Charles Radzivill, a patriot grandee, turned his attention to the Princess Tarrakanof—aware of the secret of her birth—as one who might be used against Catherine, and perhaps supplant her, being a native Russian, the granddaughter of Peter I., while the czarina was a foreigner. It is surmised, and is not improbable, that the splendid vision might flit before him of raising himself to the highest place in the empire as the husband of the princess. However this may be, he was an honourable man, but weak and credulous. Having gained the confidence of the female attendants of the princess, he privately removed her to his estates in Lithuania; and upon that province being overrun by the Russian armies, he took her to Italy, and settled at Rome, where she received the attention and instruction

due to her birth and rank. The empress, upon being informed of this proceeding, ordered his estates to be confiscated, his property to be pillaged, his stewards to be arrested, in order to prevent them making any remittances to their master, and offered through her agents gratuities to the Roman bankers as an inducement to them to withhold advances.

After disposing of some jewels, and enduring straitened circumstances, Radzivill ventured back in the hope of raising means, leaving his charge in strict privacy at Rome under the care of a governess. On returning to Poland, he was not visited with vengeance, but assailed by temptation. The Russian ambassador offered him the restoration of his immense estates, and full compensation for all his losses, on condition of his delivering up the princess into the hands of her imperial majesty. This proposition was at once rejected as an insult; upon which he was simply required to promise, "on the honour of a gentleman," that he would break off correspondence with her, and in no way encourage ambitious dreams in her mind. In that case, the ambassador promised, "on the honour of a gentleman," that she should be permitted to live abroad, and be wholly unmolested; at the same time he intimated that misfortune and ruin must inevitably befall both if the wishes of the empress were not complied with. Radzivill had the weakness to accept the proposal, but previously commended the young Tarra-

kanof to the care of some friends, and sent her a supply of money, which, however, never came to hand. There can be no doubt that he did not suffer himself to be duped wilfully, but believed in the good faith of the Russian government. He had also treated the princess with perfect respect and kindness, though it was an act of great indiscretion, and a fatal one, to involve a young girl, not more than sixteen years of age, in the meshes of a political plot.

Having deprived the princess of a protector, Catherine prepared to pounce upon her prey, fully resolved to secure herself against rivalry, by having the possible competitor under lock and key in St. Petersburg. But this was not to be accomplished by force, without a violation of territory. Neither could it be effected by fair means; and measures as base as ever the villany of man or woman conceived were adopted to bring the victim from the banks of the Tiber to those of the Neva. The empress had an agent at hand, ready to gratify her wishes by entering into any scheme of iniquity. This was Alexis Orlof, the man who had been first and foremost in the murder of her husband. Yet, dark as was that tragedy, the case of the Princess Tarrakanof is darker still. It is necessary to state that Orlof at this period was the nominal admiral of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean, with British officers, and Greig, Elphinstone, and others, under him as the real commanders. He had been paying a visit to St. Peters-

burg when he received his instructions, and proceeded from thence by way of Vienna to Leghorn, where his squadron was expected. He soon obtained the services of one of those tools with which Italy swarms to aid him in his abominable project. This was Carlo Ribas, an absconded Neapolitan felon, who subsequently came to Russia, and was rewarded for his baseness by being made Knight of Malta, and vice-admiral of the Black Sea.

One day a stranger called upon the princess at Rome, and was admitted to an interview. He was young, appeared in a splendid uniform, had a smooth tongue, insinuating manners, and conducted himself with the utmost deference. This was Ribas, who had discovered the obscure lodging of the lonely girl. He stated that, having become accidentally acquainted with her abode, he had waited upon her to assure the grand-daughter of Peter I. of the respect of her countrymen, and to express his own sincere sympathy with her desolate position. Before taking his leave, he bent the knee to one of royal blood, and begged to offer pecuniary assistance. Being in want, it was thankfully received. The visit was repeated; again and again the same subdued and distant bearing was observed, till, having gained the confidence of the unsuspecting Tarrakanof, he intimated that a far higher personage than himself was concerned on her behalf. After keeping her for some time in suspense, he at last revealed the secret that her

countrymen were dissatisfied with the government of Catherine, and that the great Count Orlof especially was in favour of a lineal descendant of Peter. This statement was implicitly believed as it harmonised with hints which she had received from Prince Radzivill. The emissary further declared that Orlof, having come to Leghorn for the purpose of putting himself in communication with her, he would speedily appear in person and make further disclosures. The steps need not be followed one by one by which a guileless, defenceless, and inexperienced creature was ensnared to her ruin. Orlof in due course presented himself. He assumed the appearance of a frank, honest, warm-hearted, and noble-minded man, and succeeded in gaining the affections of the girl, persuading her to become his wife. In an evil hour she consented; and, under pretence of having the marriage celebrated according to the rights of the Greek church, he employed some Italian blackguards to officiate at the ceremony as priests and notaries.

Never was husband more attentive and tender to his wife than was Orlof to the Princess Tarrakanof, though he never allowed her to appear in public unless in his company. After some time had elapsed, he proposed leaving Rome, and living in some other city of Italy more conveniently situated, being in daily expectation of the plot breaking out which was to place her upon the throne of Russia. To this she replied that,

"having married him, not out of ambition, but for affection, she would willingly accompany him to the end of the world." They removed to Pisa, where she became known as *la bella e buena princessa*, "the good and beautiful princess." While in this city Orlof was informed that his squadron had reached the port of Leghorn, where his presence was necessary; and his wife at once proposed to accompany him thither. On arriving, she was received into the house of the British consul, was visited by all the ladies of rank in the place, and, at her own request, was taken on board the fleet, which she was curious to examine. A barge with splendid awnings conveyed the princess to the ships with her attendants; a second transported Orlof and Admiral Greig; a third followed with Russian and British officers. But no sooner was she on deck than the delusion of some months' standing was dispelled for ever, and a horrible reality was revealed. She was seized, handcuffed, carried below, and the vessel set sail for Russia! Of course the betrayer had so arranged his plan, that the infernal nature of the outrage did not immediately transpire. As soon as it was known, the inhabitants of Leghorn loudly expressed their resentment, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany formally complained of a violation of territory. But Catherine and her minion were prepared to violate all laws, divine and human, to accomplish their own purposes; and having secured their victim, what cared they for

the public opinion of Europe? On reaching St. Petersburg, the hapless lady was immured in the fortress, and never repassed its walls. This was in 1771. How long she lived, and what was the manner of her death, are points involved in obscurity. One relation is, that she fell by the hands of the executioner; but there is another more generally current. On Sunday, September 10th, 1777, six years after her imprisonment commenced, a westerly gale drove up the waters of the Gulf of Finland into the Neva, and the river overflowed its banks — not an uncommon incident in the history of the Russian capital. At ten o'clock in the morning the water was nearly eleven feet above its usual level. A ship of Lubeck was carried by the inundation into the wood of Vassili-ostrof; the yacht of the Duchess of Kingston was cast upon the bar and damaged; wooden houses were washed away entire; and the fortress being flooded, the princess Tarrakanof was drowned in her dungeon. However this may be, there can be but one opinion, that seldom has a more fiendish deed been committed than the marriage of Orlof. It was contracted on his part in order to commit a murder, far transcending in foul atrocity ordinary assassination.

CHAP. XVI.

THE PLAGUE AT MOSCOW. — FLIGHT OF THE KALMUCKS.

COLONISTS INVITED.—MEDICAL SCIENCE PROMOTED.—INOCULATION FOR SMALL-POX. — FOUNDLING-HOSPITALS. — APPEARANCE OF THE PLAGUE. — JASSY, KIEV, AND MOSCOW. — RAVAGES OF THE PESTILENCE. — SUPERSTITION OF THE PEOPLE. — MURDER OF THE ARCHBISHOP. — CESSATION OF THE PLAGUE. — THE KALMUCKS. — THEIR HISTORY AND OPPRESSION. — EXTRAORDINARY FLIGHT. — CHINESE RECORD OF THE EVENT.

To increase the population of an empire crowded with vast solitudes was a favourite object of state policy in the reign of Catherine II., upon which millions of roubles were expended. It was pursued both by inviting accessions of subjects from without and attempting to remove or check causes of depopulation within. Scarcely had she been seated upon the throne, when the empress ordered it to be made known that foreigners would be welcome in her dominions; and an office of government was instituted for the guardianship of strangers. The lands proper for agriculture, hitherto unoccupied, with their relative position to rivers and woods, were publicly notified,—among others,

some extensive tracts in the provinces of Tobolsk, Saratov, Astrachan, and Bielgorod. But persons who preferred to settle in the towns, as merchants, mechanics, or for general purposes, were assured of a gracious reception. The colonists were promised remuneration for the expenses of the journey; an advance of capital, if desired, free of interest for ten years; exemption from all military or civil service, and from all taxes and imposts for a specified time; the management of their own affairs, without the interference of the imperial authorities, if they formed distinct communities; and perfect religious toleration. These brilliant proposals were responded to by hundreds and thousands, chiefly Germans, of a most miscellaneous description. Serious religionists anxious to escape from intolerant governments, artificers and farmers eager to improve their circumstances, speculators, beggars, and vagabonds, set out for Russia, expecting to meet with official attention within the empire while on the road; and not a few calculated upon finding lands spontaneously flowing with milk and honey at the end of their pilgrimage. They were wofully misled and self-deceived. From the frontier to their destination, the journey was a wearisome trudge on foot, occupying several months. Its miseries, from the want of customary accommodation, the insolence and harshness of officials, ignorance of the language, and mistakes respecting the route, were long remembered by those who survived it; for numbers perished by the way of fatigue,

disease, and neglect. The first settlers also being only provided by the bounty of the government with a few poor reed huts in their locations, succumbed to cold and hardship in the rigorous winter of Russia, till taught by experience its inclemency, the survivors housed themselves in holes of the earth like the natives. Upon settlements being effected and putting on a promising appearance, the great insurrection of the reign broke out, and many were desolated. From these causes it resulted that 100,000 persons, brought into the empire in 1764-5, were in ten years cut down to 28,293, dispersed and languishing on the banks of the Volga and Dnieper.

To conserve life by checking the ravages of disease, the empress endeavoured to place competent professional skill within the reach of her subjects. This humane measure was dictated by policy of state, not by enlightened humanity, for at the price of their groans, toil, and misery, the millions lavished upon worthless favourites, expensive pleasures, and glittering pomp, were obtained. Prior to the eighteenth century, medicine and surgery were unknown in the empire as domestic sciences. While foreign physicians were maintained at the court of the czars, the people were in the hands of quacks and impostors, or resigned themselves to the care of some favourite saint, whose picture received a votive offering as an appeal for aid in sickness or a token of gratitude on recovery. So

helpless was Russia in this respect, that Peter I. deemed it necessary to acquaint himself in Holland with the art of handling the lancet, drawing a tooth, and reducing a dislocation. He founded hospitals, and brought into his dominions physicians and surgeons; but they were exclusively for the army and navy. In order to domesticate the science of medicine and extend its advantages, Catherine established an imperial medical college, to educate "Russian doctors, surgeons, operators, and apothecaries, to preserve the people of the empire." This institute published the first Pharmacopœia Rossica in 1778; and under its auspices general hospitals appeared in the capitals and provinces, though at first with scant accommodation and very imperfect arrangements.

One malady, the small-pox, was specially dreaded by the czarina. Just before her marriage with the murdered Peter III., he had been attacked with it, and was so terribly disfigured that, after their first interview, upon his recovery, she was carried fainting to her apartments. The empress therefore patronised the practice of inoculation, submitted to the operation herself, along with her son the Grand-Duke Paul, and established a public inoculating institution in the capital. Dimsdale, an English physician was specially sent for from Hertford to take charge of the imperial family through the process. "I have not," said Catherine, writing afterwards to Voltaire, "kept my bed a

single instant, and I have received company every day. I am about to have my only son inoculated. The grand-master of artillery, Count Orlof, doubting whether he had ever had the small-pox, has put himself under the hands of our Englishman, and, the next day after the operation, went to the hunt in a very deep fall of snow." Dimsdale received a splendid donation for his services, and an annual pension for life in his own country, with the rank of a Russian noble. Thus sanctioned, the practice rapidly extended to the remotest parts of the empire, to the abatement of the natural disease. But it is noticed, in the history of this terrible scourge, that its worst effects seem to have been personal disfigurement in European Russia, while frightfully fatal among the nomadic races of Siberia.

Foundling hospitals were established with the same object in view, the preservation of life, either by restraining direct infanticide or preventing the gradual perpetration of the crime by neglect, though the milder phrase of "education houses" was applied to them. The two colossal institutions of this kind now at St. Petersburg and Moscow, each possessing an annual revenue greater than that of some European kingdoms, and constantly numbering at least 20,000 of the rising generation under its care, were started by the empress. Both are furnished with a small warm room as a lodge, kept open day and night throughout the year, for the reception of children. No question is ever asked of

those who bring them except whether the child has been baptised and named. During the first six weeks, the infants are usually kept in the institution, after which they a resent out to nurse among the peasantry in the neighbourhood till they are six years old, when they are returned for education in appointed seminaries. The stimulant to vice supplied by this arrangement is obvious, while the end sought, that of a natural increase, is not gained by violating the laws of nature. It is calculated that of the children brought into the St. Petersburg institute, one-fourth die during the first six weeks, and of those sent out among the peasants, more than one-half die during the six years. Thus while one attains that age, three go to the church-yard, whereas, in the common course of nature, had they remained with their mothers, more than half those children would be then alive. The enormous distances through which they are carried is supposed to be one main cause of the mortality. On the same day that a child has been brought to the asylum from Bessarabia on the Danube, another has arrived from Tobolsk in Siberia, journeying in each case more than a thousand miles.

While measures were taken to increase the population, three great calamities occurred to reduce it, besides the foreign wars, the plague at Moscow, the flight of the Kalmucks, and the rebellion of Pugatchef. These events transpired in the space of four years.

During a war with the Turks, the Russian armies on the banks of the Danube encountered the contagion of the plague, which proved as fatal to the soldiers of the cross as to the warriors of the crescent. Parties returning from the seat of war carried the malady into the heart of the empire. It passed from Jassy to Kiev and thence to Moscow, decimating the people. The folly of the commanders contributed to its propagation, for, as if the nature of things could be altered by a military order, Lieutenant-General Stofeln at Jassy forbade the name of plague to be mentioned, and compelled the medical officers to sign a written declaration that the distemper was only a spotted fever. This proceeding, intended to pacify the troops and citizens, had the effect of putting them off their guard, and increased the number of victims. Two regiments and one battalion were speedily reduced to a wreck, and the general perished. At Kiev the governor was induced by a Turkish officer taken prisoner to try the effect of a charm. This man wrote tickets containing the prayer: — "O great Mohammed! have pity for this once on the Christians, for the sake of our deliverance from captivity, and free them soon from the pestilence." The ignorant and superstitious populace eagerly scrambled for these talismans, and the stupid commandant had them affixed to the churches. At Moscow the dreadful visitor appeared about Christmas 1770; but as no bills of mortality had ever been issued

in the city, an unusual number of deaths among the vast population of 300,000 was not at first observed. When this was noticed, a ukase was issued, assuring the people that there was no pestilence, and that a false alarm had been wickedly raised among the burghers. It was not till March 1771 that the members of the medical council were unanimous respecting the disease being the plague, and issued a sanatory document for the guidance of the public.

In this time of peril, the empress sent General Yerapkin to take charge of the city. Inspectors of the malady were appointed to particular districts; the police required an account to be given of every distempered person; the public baths were closed; the streets were fumigated, but commonly dung and other impure substances were used; the dead were ordered to be buried without the walls, but the filling up of the graves with lime was deemed unadvisable. Moscow was of course deserted by the rich and noble at an early stage of the calamity; and all who could leave it, finally retired to the neighbourhood, extending the disaster to the villages. The scene acquired its most frightful features as the summer closed, for the deaths, which amounted to 7268 in the month of August, rose to 21,401 in September, and were 17,561 in October, when probably, owing to flight and the previous mortality, the population had been reduced to one-sixth of its ordinary number. The ignorance and fanaticism

of the common people aided the demon of disease. They treated with contempt the precautions urged by the magistracy; concealed cases of disease to prevent the pestilent from being taken to the lazarets; secretly interred the dead in their own houses to avoid a burial apart from the household grave; attacked the physicians and surgeons in the streets, if foreigners, as the interested and malignant authors of the malady; held prayers and honours to the pictures of the saints to be the only effectual modes of cure; and at last furiously resented interference with their superstitions by a sacerdotal assassination.

In the awful month of September a vulgar fanatic collected a number of the rabble, and declared to them that the Varvarian Mother of God had appeared to him, complaining that her picture, which hung near the gate of St. Barbara, had been neglected, but promising by a miracle to terminate the distress of the city, if the worship was zealously revived. The tale was believed, and currency was given to it. The gate was soon visited by the faithful, who addressed vociferous cries to the picture, brought ornaments of attire to hang around it, and presented other votive offerings of value. Religious processions to the spot were arranged; and day after day the daub of a painting had a multitude of suppliants before it, among whom even the sick mingled with the uninfected. To stop this insane procedure, Ambrosius, the Archbishop of Moscow, deter-

mined to remove the dingy face of the Varvarian Mother, and applied to the military commandant for assistance. A party of soldiers was accordingly sent to execute this mission. But though it was late at night, there was a mob of devotees at the place, who drove off the military, and rose in insurrection. Repairing to the churches, they rang the bells, roused the populace, made known the dishonour intended to be offered to the sacred figure, and all joined in denouncing the archbishop as a heretic, and vowing vengeance against him. Hearing of his danger, the prelate fled to the Donskoi monastery without the city; but he was followed thither by the mob, and savagely murdered in the church, while officiating at the altar, This tumult was not subdued till Yerapkin, with a strong detachment of troops, and field-pieces, had fought a regular battle with the rebels, and laid hundreds of them dead in the streets.

Upon hearing of this outrage, the empress sent her favourite Gregory Orlof, invested with large powers, to restore order and enforce obedience. He promptly repaired to the dangerous post, and with great courage addressed himself to the task of curbing the pestilence and restraining the passions of the distracted multitude. In November, upon the winter setting in with great severity, the plague abated, and finally disappeared from the capital in January 1772. Upon its cessation, 117 churches, which had been shut up, having lost their

priests, 45 courts of judicature and public offices, 113 manufactories, with thousands of houses, underwent the process of purification. This was effected by careful cleansing, ventilation and exposure to the severities of the frost, fumigations and other methods; while the thirteen burial places assigned for those who had died of the pestilence were covered to a considerable depth with fresh earth. Moscow lost upwards of 60,000 inhabitants by this visitation, and double that number perished in the provinces. The empress honoured Orlof by erecting a triumphal arch at Tzarsko-Selo, with the inscription, "Moscow delivered from the contagion by Orlof." But the same year, after having been all-powerful since her accession to the throne, while the chief agent in bringing her to it, his carriage was stopped at the gate of St. Petersburg by the officer on guard, who produced an order not to allow him to enter the city; and, silently brooding over fickle fortune, he travelled to one of his country seats.

About the same time that the plague made its appearance, a large number of subjects was lost to the empire by nearly an entire race suddenly withdrawing from it to return to the seat of their forefathers. In the year 1630, Mongols of the Torgouth and Derbet tribes, better known in Europe and Western Asia by the name of Kalmucks, arrived on the banks of the Volga, having left the borders of the great wall of China, and the protection of the Chinese emperor, from unknown

causes. They extended themselves in separate hordes over the vast unoccupied steppes on both sides of the Volga, from thence to the Don, and along the shores of the Caspian to the slopes of the Caucasus. Being nomadic in their habits by disposition and necessity, they passed the winter in the south of this district and the summer in the north, but seldom occupied the same spot more than a few weeks together, owing to the herbage being exhausted, returning to it again when reclothed with grass. Broad faces, small eyes, and flat noses, with a very swarthy complexion, marked their physiognomy, and proclaimed their Asiatic origin. These nomades tilled no land, but kept extensive flocks and herds, consisting of sheep, oxen, camels, and especially horses. Horse-flesh was their ordinary food, and koumiss, a preparation of mare's milk, a daily drink. They sang the praises of the bright bay steed, vieing with the wind in swiftness, and of the charming little grass in the steppe bending to the breeze—"God, our Lord, thou wilt grant us of thy grace to meet in another country." They lived in tents of black felt, of cylindrical shape, with a conical top, open at the apex to let out the smoke. Though inoffensive among themselves, and hospitable in the extreme to strangers, interference easily rendered them impatient, and injury provoked implacable hostility. As Buddhists in religion they had priests and high priests, subject to, and in correspondence with, the Dalai-Lama in Thibet, who

resided separate from the particular camp to which they were attached, as a distinct superior body. After death the bodies of the high-priests were burnt with great ceremony, and the ashes deposited in small temples erected for the purpose of receiving them, usually in the most unfrequented parts of the wilderness, from which the people ever afterwards kept aloof, in order not to profane them by their presence. The traveller occasionally stumbles upon these lonely tombs in the sandy wastes.

The Kalmuck tribes included nnmerous hordes, each under a chief; but all acknowledged a superior prince or khan, whose rule was hereditary. Without becoming Russian subjects, they accepted the protection of the empire, and considered themselves bound to contribute to its necessities as protected neighbours by a military contingent. Hence Peter I., when descending the Volga, on his expedition to Persia, sought an interview with Aiouki, khan of the Kalmucks. This prince, a hearty old man of seventy, with his queen, visited the czar on board his galley, and was received with sovereign honours. Peter requested the aid of 10,000 of his troops, but Aiouki thought 5000 sufficient, and placed them at his disposal. This khan was lord-paramount of the country from the northerly bend of the Volga to the foot of the Caucasus. A great tumulus, still known by the name of Bairin Tolkon, the "Mountain of Joy," marks the spot where he defeated

the Nogais of the Kuban, and buried those who fell in the battle. Though in connection with Russia, he secretly maintained relations with China; and an embassy under a mandarin reached him from the court of Pekin, by the way of Siberia, with assurances of friendship. It must have been managed very adroitly, not to have awakened the suspicions of the Russian authorities.

Upon the decease of Aiouki in 1724 dissensions arose in his family with reference to the sovereignty, which were diligently fomented by the agents of Russia, with the view of converting friendly protection into actual dominion. By intrigues and bribes the right of investing a new khan was transferred from the Dalai-Lama of Thibet to the court of St. Petersburg, and the tribes were put under the special control of a Russian superintendent, subordinate to the governor of Astrachan. Still Oubacha, the khan contemporary with Catherine II., paid no tribute to her treasury, and considered himself rather an ally than a vassal, only required to supply a cavalry force to her armies. He did this in the first war with Turkey; and a detachment took part in the siege of Otchakow. Immediately after this campaign, the rupture took place between the Kalmucks and the government, leading to the most extraordinary emigration of modern times. The event has been variously explained, but a combination of causes led to it. Adopting those principles of uni-

formity in the management of the empire which have since been so characteristic of Russian policy, the empress, by her agents, innovated upon the usages of the children of the steppes, till Oubacha saw that he must escape from his powerful neighbour, or lose what remained to him of the primitive authority of the khans. While the prince felt himself almost reduced to a cipher, the people found themselves under an oppressive yoke. Kischenskoi, the Russian inspector, harassed them with exactions and spoiled them of their cattle, to satisfy his avarice, adding insult to injury upon complaint being made. After having borne this treatment with quietness, if not with patience, the officer precipitated a revolt by striking a venerable chief who resisted his peculations, and by ordering corporal punishment to be administered to one of the khan's ministers who remonstrated with him. The indignity inspired prince and subjects, old and young, men and women, with a common determination to turn their backs on Europe, and seek the borders of China, the territory from which their fathers had migrated, "to come and admire," as they said, "more closely the brilliant lustre of the heavens, and at last to enjoy, like so many others, the happiness of having henceforth for master the greatest prince in the world."

Carefully concealing the intention, this warlike, pastoral, and nomadic people assembled in the steppes on the left bank of the Volga, and commenced their

flight on the 5th of January 1771, the day appointed by the high priests. They took along with them tents, goods, dogs, droves of horses, herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep, and left the country they had occupied a perfect desert. Oubacha marched with 70,000 hearths or families, numbering at least 300,000 souls; but 15,000 families were left behind, and remained in Russia, not being able to reach in time the place of rendezvous. The fugitives formed themselves into three great bodies, each with a van and rear-guard, and with the flanks well protected, who constantly kept each other in sight. But long before accomplishing half the journey of 3000 miles, all order was destroyed, and those who reached the Chinese frontier arrived emaciated from want, half naked, and worn out by fatigue and hardship. Thousands were slain in fighting their way through the Cossacks of the Ural, and the wild hordes of the Kirghis, their inveterate enemies; and thousands perished in the inhospitable regions and waterless deserts of their route. After two months' marching, the exhausted hordes encamped on the Irguitch, which falls into Lake Aksakal, to the north of the Sea of Aral. They had then to cross the frightful desert of Chareh Ousoun, where they were exposed to all the torments of thirst, and suffered indescribable disasters, after which they arrived at Lake Palkaché Nor, and forced a passage through the country of the Buriats, gaining the Chinese dominions

after a journey of eight months. The wanderers, reduced from 70,000 to 50,000 families, were hospitably received by order of the Emperor Kien Long, who caused a stone monument to be erected in commemoration of the remarkable event, to which an inscription was appended, in four languages, stating its circumstances, drawn up by himself. Father Amiot, in the Memoirs of the Jesuits, gives this interesting document at length; and a few extracts merit introduction. It is only necessary to observe that the Kalmucks who reached China, were chiefly Mongols of the Torgouth tribe.

"Records of the transmigrations of the Torgouths, who voluntarily, and of their own full accord, came bodily as a nation, and submitted themselves to the empire of China.

"Oubacha, who is now khan of the Torgouths, is great grandson of Aiouki. The Russians, never ceasing to require soldiers of him to be incorporated in their troops, having at last taken his own son from him as a hostage, and being besides of a different religion from himself, and making no account of that of the Lamas which the Torgouths profess, Oubacha and his people finally determined to shake off a yoke which was daily becoming more and more insupportable.

"After having secretly deliberated among themselves, they resolved to quit an abode where they had to suffer

so much, and come and dwell in the countries subject to China, where the religion of Fo is professed.

"In the beginning of the eleventh moon of last year, they began their march, with their women and children and all their baggage, traversed the country of the Hasacks, passed along the shores of Lake Palkaché Nor and through the adjoining deserts; and towards the close of the sixth moon of this year, after having completed more than 10,000 leagues in the eight months of their wayfaring, they at last arrived on the frontiers of Chara Pen, not far from the banks of the Ily. I was already aware that the Torgouths were on their march to submit themselves to me, the news having been brought me shortly after their departure from Etchil. I then reflected that Iletou, general of the troops at Ily, having already been charged with other very important affairs, it was to be feared that he could not regulate those of the new comers with all the requisite attention.

"Chouhédé, one of the general's councillors, was at Ouché, employed in maintaining order among the Mahometans. As he was at hand to attend to the Torgouths, I ordered him to repair to Ily, that he might use his best efforts to establish them solidly."

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"The Torgouths arrived; and at once found lodging, food, and all the conveniences they could have enjoyed each in his own dwelling. Nor was this all;

the principal men among them, who were to come in person and pay homage to me, were conducted with honour and free of expense by the imperial post-roads to the place where I then was. I saw them, spoke to them, and was pleased that they should enjoy the pleasures of the chase with me; and after the days allotted to that recreation were ended, they repaired in my suite to Ge Ho. There I gave them the banquet of ceremony."

* * * * * *

"Who would have said it! When I had the least reason to expect it—when I was not even thinking of it—that branch of the Eleuths which had been the first to separate from the trunk, the Torgouths who had voluntarily expatriated themselves to live under an alien and remote dominion, those very Torgouths came of themselves and submitted to me of their own free will; and it was at Ge Ho, near the venerable spot where rest the ashes of my grandfather, Kâng Hi, that I had the unsought opportunity of solemnly admitting them among the number of my subjects."

* * * * * *

"The Torgouths came; I received them; they wanted even the commonest necessaries of life; I provided them with everything abundantly; I opened for them my granaries and my coffers, my stalls and my studs. Out of the former I bestowed on them what was requisite for their present wants; from the latter I

desired that they should be supplied with the means of providing for themselves in time to come. I intrusted the management of this important affair to those of my grandees whose disinterestedness and enlightenment were already known to me. I hope and trust that everything will be done to the entire satisfaction of the Torgouths. It is needless to say more in this place. My intention has only been to give a summary of what has come to pass."

Two days elapsed before the Russians were aware of this extraordinary elopement. Three regiments were immediately sent off in pursuit, and orders were given for a larger corps to follow, as soon as the escapade was known at St. Petersburg. They captured and brought back straggling parties, but never came up with the main body, while the pursuers were dreadfully reduced in numbers by privation in the useless expedition. The ministers of Catherine sent a memorial to China, demanding the restitution of the fugitives, but to no purpose. The supreme tribunal of Pekin replied by stating, that "their sovereign was not a prince so unjust as to deliver up his subjects to foreigners, nor so cruel a father as to drive away children who returned to the bosom of their family; that he had no intimation of the design of the Kalmucks till the moment of their arrival; and that then without delay he caused to be restored to them the habitations that had belonged to them from time immemorial; that, in short, the empress

had no reason to complain of the Kalmucks, but certainly of the officer who had dared to lift his hand against a servant of the khan's, and to order his minister to undergo the battogues." The letter was subscribed: — "In the 36th year, the 7th month, and the 13th day of the reign of Kien-Long." This was not the only curt reply which the empress received from the same quarter. Upon sending an envoy to propose a new treaty of commerce, he received for his answer: — "Let your mistress learn to keep old treaties, and then it will be time enough to apply for new ones." China narrowly escaped a grand conflict with Russia, for it was one of Potemkin's projects to take possession of the valley of the Amour, march upon Pekin, and overthrow the dynasty of the Mantchoos. Preparations were made for this enterprise at Nershinsk; and it would have been attempted but for his death at the juncture.

The Kalmucks who remained in Russia after the flight of their brethren, 15,000 families, were brought under the direct control of the government. Their descendants at present are not supposed to have increased in number, owing to contagious and epidemic diseases, with greater facilities for drinking ardent spirits. They still retain the habits and religion of their forefathers, wander over the steppes with droves, herds, and flocks, though within restricted limits, and preserve intact the physiognomy of Asia. Keen-

sighted, like all inhabitants of vast plains, they can distinguish an hour after sunset a camel at the distance of miles; with sharp hearing, they catch the sound of a footfall at an equal remoteness; and roam with extraordinary facility the pathless wilderness, without any apparent mark to guide them, yet never missing the right course. Great efforts have been made for their conversion from Buddhism by the Moravians, who came to settle in the empire in consequence of Catherine's invitation to foreign colonists, founded Sarepta near the great bend of the Volga, and had chiefly the evangelisation of these tribes in view. At the time of the flight, they had been little more than twelve months in their new home, and would infallibly have been carried along with the fugitives, as a safeguard against intelligence transpiring, but for the unusual mildness of the winter, which kept the river open and flooded, preventing the Kalmucks in their neighbourhood from joining the great horde. The design for which the colony was established has been completely frustrated, since no conversions are now allowed in the empire, except those in favour of the dominant church.

CHAP. XVII.

REBELLION OF PUGATCHEF.—COURT OF CATHERINE II.

THE FALSE PETERS. — PUGATCHEF — HIS EARLY CAREER. — FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE. — EARLY SUCCESSES. — HYPOCRISY AND FEROCITY. — MEASURES OF CATHERINE. — PROGRESS OF PUGATCHEF. — HIS BARBARITY TO LOWITZ. — FATE OF THE REBEL. — GOVERNMENT OF CATHERINE. — HER LITERARY PRETENSIONS. — INSTRUCTIONS FOR A CODE OF LAWS. — ASSEMBLY AT MOSCOW. — TOLERATION DINNER. — COURT FAVOURITES. — RUINOUS EXPENDITURE.

THE third great social calamity of the reign was a far more serious event than the two preceding, as it threatened the stability of the throne, convulsed a vast portion of the empire, and entailed an enormous loss of life by the sword. Soon after the murder of Peter III., though his body had been publicly exposed in the church of St. Alexander Nevski, a rumour arose that he had escaped from his assassins, and was living concealed in some distant province, till more favourable circumstances allowed him to regain his throne and punish the traitors. Nothing can more strikingly show the prevalence of extreme dissatisfac-

tion among the people than the circulation of this report, and the credit it received, from the frontiers of Turkey to the most distant wilds of Siberia. In consequence of it, the part of the false Dmitris in a former age was acted over again by false Peters; and six audacious pretenders availed themselves of this popular delusion to personate the late czar. The first was a shoemaker of Voronetz, who appeared in 1767; the second, in 1770, was a deserter from the regiment of Orlof; the third, about the same time, was an Illyrian of good address, who had practised surgery; the fourth, in 1772, was a serf belonging to the Woronzow family; the fifth, in the same year, was a convict escaped out of prison at Irkutsk. Such obscure adventurers were soon seized and put to death, except the third in rotation, Stefano Piccolo, who was indebted for his escape to the fact that he confined himself to the Turkish province of Montinegro, and was thus beyond the reach of the Russian government. All these impositions were comedies, in comparison with the sixth and last attempt to profit by the general error made by Pugatchef. His rebellion was a tremendous tragedy.

This man, Ihkmelian Pugatchef, whose daring, abilities, ferocity, and successes made the empire tremble and gave sleepless nights to the empress, was the son of a humble Cossack, born at Simoveisk on the banks of the Don. He served as a private soldier against the Prussians, then against the Turks, and was

present at the siege of Bender in 1769. At this time the extraordinary likeness which he bore to Peter III. was noticed by the officers of the staff, though he was of larger make and far greater vigour. One of them, after gazing upon him some time, observed, "If the emperor Peter III., my master, were not dead, I should believe that I saw him once more." In consequence of this resemblance, he was invited to the table of general Totleben, where the fact was substantiated; and it is also confirmed by portraits of the czar and the rebel in the British Museum. Wishing to leave the army, but not able to gain his discharge, Pugatchef deserted, and fled into Poland, where some of the Russian sectaries, who had retired thither from persecution at home, treated him with kindness. To them he mentioned his likeness to the late emperor; and it is very probable that they suggested to him the scheme of impersonation, in the hope of relieving their brethren within the empire from civil and religious oppression by some great political change. It is certain that he adopted their creed, and obtained the important information from them that the sectaries would infallibly rally to the standard of a chieftain who offered them a fair prospect of deliverance from their disabilities. Almost all the Cossacks of the Don and of the Ural belonged to the dissenting sects, while Siberia swarmed with them.

The first public demonstration of his designs was

made among the Cossacks of the Ural, a curious medley of Tatar, Kalmuck, and Kirghis. races, far more barbarous than their western brethren on the Don, quite as fiery in their fanaticism, and moreover at the time specially exasperated against their Russian masters. In April 1773 he attended a secret meeting of discontended spirits, and told them that the late czar, supposed to be dead, was certainly alive, and was preparing to appear amongst them. After cautiously feeling his way, he announced in September that he was Peter III. himself, that he had escaped from the daggers of the assassins, and that the news of his death was an invention of his enemies. The Cossacks had never seen the emperor; and, by artfully exciting their passions, promising to avenge their wrongs, aud proclaiming his fellowship with them in creed, the impostor succeeded in gaining their confidence. They swore to maintain his rights, and acknowledged him as their lawful sovereign. The first spark of rebellion was struck at Iaïtzkoy a small town on the Iaïk. To obliterate the memory of the revolt, the empress changed the name of the town to Uralskaia, and gave that of Ural to the river.

As soon as the governor of Orenburg, in whose province the insurrection broke out, heard of it, he sent a detachment of troops against the rebels. But Pugatchef had military experience and skill, combined great activity with courage, had acquired a perfect

knowledge of the country, and the force despatched against him was completely cut to pieces in detail. Upon this success becoming known, with his own pretensions, his band swelled into an army. All the Cossacks declared for him; tribes of Bashkirs, Kirghis, and Nogay Tatars flocked to his standard; freebooters from the reedy shores of the Caspian hastened to share the plunder to be acquired in an outbreak; serfs left the mines and foundries of the Uralian mountains to take up arms; and patriot Poles, torn from their homes by the injustice of Catherine, escaped from scenes of exile to serve against the oppressor of their country. The latter, being skilled soldiers, were employed in disciplining the untrained hordes; and the Russian commanders were speedily sensible of their error in supposing that they were commissioned to disperse and chastise a mob. Carr, the first general sent from Moscow, after hearing of the defeat of his lieutenant, was thoroughly beaten himself, and returned in panic to the capital. Leaving Orenburg, closely invested and on the verge of famine, Pugatchef penetrated the Urals, in order to seize the gold and silver at the mines, and whatever store of brass there might be for casting cannon. He became the king of the mountains, as the Russians merely held a few fortified towns.

For some time, this daring chief adhered to his early religious profession and acted as one of the ill-used schismatics of the empire. With feigned humility he

declared that, having himself no wish for distinction, he intended to place the crown upon the head of his son, the grand duke, and spend the rest of his days in pious retirement. On his standards appeared, in large letters of gold, the motto, *Redivivus et ultor* (re-arisen and avenged), not merely alluding to his own personal career, but to the changed fortunes of the nonconformist bodies. To strengthen their zeal on his behalf he had recourse to the most vulgar expedients, appearing occasionally in sacerdotal robes to bestow his blessing upon the fanatics who came in crowds to his banner. One of their priests, named Fuma, in the reign of Peter I., had been condemned to lose his right hand by fire and to be burned alive, for having hewn to pieces with an axe the images of the saints in a church of the establishment. He underwent the punishment with great firmness at Moscow, and was both venerated as a martyr and worshipped as a saint by his co-religionists. Pugatchef not only exhibited the likeness of the martyr without a hand upon his standard, to which he publicly showed religious veneration, but he procured a one-handed man to personate him, as if alive from the dead, who could declaim as vehemently against the abuses in church and state as the defunct zealot. This impudent trick had immense success. The frenzied crowd shouted, "Long live Fuma," and "Long live our beloved emperor, our great czar, our benefactor, the friend of our church!"

But as the adventurer became powerful, he forgot his engagements, ceased his hypocrisy, changed his character, and shook the confidence of his bands by all kinds of debauchery and contempt for all forms of religion. Adopting the imperial insignia, he established a court, named ministers, instituted orders of knighthood, conferred patents of nobility, and issued gold, silver, and copper coins, stamped with his image, and bearing the inscription, "Peter III., Emperor of all the Russias." His native ferocity, conspicuous from the first, became more terrible, for no captive noble or officer of the opposite party was ever spared instant execution, while women were dishonoured and children butchered. Catherine and her courtiers, who at first treated the rebellion as the mere rising of a gang of robbers, found it necessary to adopt strenuous efforts to quell it. Though too prudent to betray fear, and jestingly styling her rival *le Marquis Pugatchef*, she was really alarmed. There was ample cause for the most serious apprehensions, for nearly all the disposable troops were far distant prosecuting a war with Turkey; and had the rebels boldly marched to Moscow, where the empress was detested and the serfs were impatient to rise against their lords, her throne would have been in danger of an irretrievable overthrow. At length in the depth of winter, 1773-4, an army of 45,000 veterans took the field under the command of General Bibikof, who was specially recalled from the Turkish

frontier, and had a formidable train of artillery. A manifesto also appeared, denouncing the insurrection of Pugatchef as that of a bandit, and slightly alluding to his imposition. This was followed by ukases warning the people not to obey any order which was not signed by the empress or did not emanate from St. Petersburg, inviting also the deluded Cossacks to return to their allegiance upon a promise of pardon, and offering a reward of 100,000 silver rubles for the person of their leader, dead or alive. Yet though his life must necessarily have been at the option of many thousands of barbarians, in the various opportunities which misfortune, defeat, flight, and darkness afforded for betrayal, not one was found base enough to be bribed to treachery. Pugatchef, though he could neither read nor write, had subordinates able to frame manifestoes; and one was widely circulated, printed in large letters, and in various dialects, by which he abolished servitude, unconditionally liberated all the peasants from the grasp of their oppressors, and made them proprietors of the land on which they toiled. This was attacking the weak point of the empire; and its total disorganisation would most likely have been effected, had the insurgent chief been as sagacious and prudent as he was courageous.

For some time successes and reverses were evenly balanced between the imperialists and the rebels. Through the first half of the year 1774 the carnage

was terrible on both sides; and the eastern provinces were wasted with fire and sword. Under Bibikof the troops of the empress were totally routed, after one of the most obstinate actions on record; and the general died of his wounds. But his successor Galitzin, in a second pitched battle, remained master of the field, and Pugatchef, after six hours' fighting, was compelled to flee precipitately into the fastnesses of the Urals. It was now imagined that the rebellion was over, but the supposed death-blow was only a temporary check. However rapidly the insurgents dispersed, they as quickly reassembled; and the voice of their leader must have been one of power, to call at once the fugitives to his standard after defeat, prepared to renew the struggle. With recruited forces, he broke forth from the mountains, mastered towns and forts, till the tide of victory turned against him a second time and obliged him to disappear again in their defiles. Yet, undismayed and apparently but little weakened, he descended from the heights upon the ancient kingdom of Kasan, burning, sacking, and slaying whatever obstructed his progress. Nearly the whole province was conquered; the city came into his hands, except the citadel; and the archbishop stood ready to crown him upon the surrender of the fortress. It must have fallen, and Paul Potemkin, the commander, would not have lived to perpetrate horrors in the Crimea, but for the opportune arrival of Colonel Mi-

chelson. This officer, by his daring and restless activity, had made himself so much an object of dread to the enemy that a price was set upon his head. Though of very subordinate rank, he was finally entrusted with full discretionary powers, and to him the empire was indebted for its deliverance from a terrible foe.

Driven back to his former retreat, it seemed only necessary for Pugatchef to stamp his foot upon the mountains in order to rouse legions. For the fourth time he appeared in the field; but however great the number of his followers, he now fought under decided disadvantages. His trained soldiers had mostly perished; his new recruits were chiefly peasantry armed with scythes and agricultural implements; and in July the peace with Turkey set the forces of the empire free to act against the insurrectionists. Advancing to the Volga, he descended that river, took several of the small towns on its banks, butchered the garrisons, impaled the commanders, and at Dmitrewsk committed one of his most atrocious deeds. Learning that M. Lowitz, an astronomical member of the Academy of Sciences, was in the neighbourhood, taking levels for the construction of a canal between the Volga and the Don, the brigand ordered the savant to be brought before him. He asked him whether he was an astrologer and could foretell his destiny? Receiving an evasive answer, he produced

an intercepted letter, in which the astronomer had spoken slightingly of him, and given information of his movements. Lowitz besought mercy, but none was showed. Pugatchef condemned him to be lifted up with the long pikes of some of his soldiers, and he perished miserably transfixed on their points. This was, as the inhuman monster observed, that "he might have the better opportunity of giving more correct information respecting this world, and be on the way to the other nearer the countless stars!"

In order to unmask the impostor, the agents of Catherine found out his first wife at the Don, and sent her to meet him. It was arranged that she should encounter him publicly and unexpectedly; but the stratagem failed in its object. Without betraying the slightest confusion, Pugatchef observed to his attendants: "Take care of that woman; I knew her husband; he served me faithfully; the poor creature is at times deranged." Being aware that Peter III. spoke German, of which he himself did not understand a syllable, he assembled all the German officers taken prisoners by his army, and ordered their execution to avoid discovery. While in the basin of the Volga he resolved upon a march to Moscow; but the time for the execution of this politic step had gone by. Michelson, competently reinforced, lay in the way; and as the bands of the rebel, though numerous, now consisted chiefly of ill-armed peasantry, the regular troops had little difficulty in

putting them to flight. Surprised in a difficult position on the Volga, they were routed with great slaughter; and the survivors scattered in all directions, no more to rally, being dogged day and night by the indefatigable victor. Pugatchef saved himself by swimming across the river, and gained the steppes of the Ural, attended by a few partisans. Terror, hardship, and hunger soon reduced their number by desertion; and with three subalterns, the chief sought safety in a wild cavern, concealed by an enormous stone, which still bears the name of Pugatchef's Cave.

His comrades were Cossacks, who had repeatedly given proofs of personal devotion to him, and seem to have enjoyed his confidence to the last. But a common danger and gloomy prospects shook their fidelity; and, actuated rather by the hopelessness of the cause than the expectation of reward, they decided upon purchasing their own safety by the sacrifice of their chief. Still so much was he dreaded that each trembled for the consequences of his suspecting their intention. Upon one of them hinting to him the peril to which he was exposed, and the impossibility of escaping from it except by submitting unconditionally to the mercy of the empress, he started up in a fury, drew a dagger, and ruched upon his adviser. The other two Cossacks immediately interposed to protect their comrade, and accomplish their purpose. After a desperate struggle, they disarmed and secured him, and conducted their

prisoner to the camp of General Samarof, on the banks of the Ural, near the very town where the design of the rebellion was first broached. From this place, by order of the commander-in-chief, he was paraded through the scene of his exploits and crimes, shut up in an iron cage, attended by a detachment of soldiers, and led to Moscow, where he arrived in the month of September. At first the fallen insurgent maintained an unconquerable silence. He also refused to eat, till means were found to compel him. His trial was conducted with all possible formality, but he was not put to the torture or required to name accomplices. It is said that he avowed himself a simple Cossack of the Don, named his birthplace, was recognised by relatives, and that, according to his own confession, the true cause of his rebellion was his marked resemblance to Peter III. combined with clerical intrigue. Pugatchef was condemned to have his hands and feet cut off, then to be quartered and beheaded, while afterwards his body was to be burned and the ashes scattered to the winds. But the actual execution, which took place at Moscow, January 21. 1775, was more humane, for he was deprived of life by beheading, before the other parts of the cruel sentence were carried into effect. This relaxation was not owing to the clemency of the crown, but either to pity or mistake on the part of the executioner, for he received the knout, had his tongue cut

out, and was exiled for life to Siberia, as a penalty for the irregularity.

Thus ended a rebellion which entailed upon the empire more than a year of panic and confusion, great internal disorganisation, an enormous loss of property, and the sacrifice of 350,000 human beings, who all perished in consequence of one life having been foully taken, that of Peter III. Great crimes in high places are not committed with impunity, owing to the power of the individuals, but are surely visited in the end, and often provoke terrible reactions from men of low estate. What secret and unaccountable charm, it has been asked, invested Pugatchef, placing him at the head of nations? The question is of easy solution. While the courage and audacity of the man might have influence, inveterate hostility to the Russian government and social system was the mainspring of the movement. Auxiliaries came from the remotest parts of the empire, excited by his proclamations, yet not simply to join the insurgent chief, but to further the cause with which his name was identified. He was the representative of oppressed democracy against a grievous despotism, — the leader of miserable serfs against their hard masters,— and the champion of religious sects, driven to fanaticism by horrible persecutions, who struggled to gain freedom of profession, while punishing a corrupt court and an intolerant hierarchy.

Having passed in safety this dangerous crisis, Catherine was comparatively undisturbed in schemes of domestic policy and foreign conquest through the remaining twenty-two years of her reign. She had great talents for government, but they were often most grievously misapplied, while even when usefully directed, her main object was not so much to confer a benefit as to acquire personal renown. Intensely vain, she multiplied projects profusely, but cared little for the success of those in which her own interests were not directly concerned, satisfied with the eclat of having her name connected with them. Hence meritorious measures, like that of founding colonies in uninhabited regions and introducing skilled husbandry from abroad, being abandoned entirely to the lowest underlings of government, were wretchedly mismanaged, while the effect of other salutary plans of administration was to a great extent neutralised by the vices of imperial and court life. The empress established a seminary for the education of young ladies of noble birth and limited means, with an equal number of citizens' daughters, who would have been much more benefited by the exhibition of a virtuous example on the throne and in high society. This was the first institution of the kind in Russia in favour of the people; and it was followed by public elementary schools in some of the principal towns. But the wholesome design was marred by the incompetency of the superintendents; for invalided agents of

police obtained the post of instructors through the influence of a patron, and even the superannuated buffoons of men in office were appointed, in order to provide for them free of expense to themselves. Catherine likewise extended the plan of the Academy of Sciences, and that of Art; purchased galleries of paintings and cabinets of curiosities; invited Euler, Pallas, and Gmelin into the empire; patronised men of letters; and founded the order of St. Vladimir for the recompense of distinguished civilians, with that of St. George to reward military merit. Not that she had any real sympathy with literature and science, based upon an appreciation of the civilising influence and moral importance of intellectual pursuits. But, governed by an insatiable appetite for every kind of fame, she connected herself with celebrated men to snatch a reflected glory from them; and cultivated the correspondence of Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Diderot, to have her praises sounded by the servile philosophers and wits of Western Europe. As an illustration of her vanity, upon some flatterer observing that she bore a strong resemblance to the Minerva of the Greek medals, she caused herself to be drawn, painted, sculptured, embroidered, carved, and cast in metal, as the Minerva of the North.

Jealous of the reputation which her neighbour, Frederick of Prussia, had obtained by his writings, the empress took pen in hand, and aspired to the character

of author and legislatrix. With the aid of a literary secretary, she produced several pieces, one of which, a dramatic composition of no merit, upon the theme of Russia against Turkey, was acted with great pomp at court, and received of course with thunders of applause. Yet this same Catherine disgraced one of her ambassadors, prince Beloselsky, a man of taste and talent, because he wrote his despatches in a pleasant vein, composed verses, was the author of a tragedy, and entertained the design of publishing historical biographies of the great men of his country. Her letters to Voltaire, the best efforts of her pen, consist chiefly of common-place sentiments agreeably expressed. But the production upon which she prided herself the most, and which was pompously read at Moscow before representatives from all parts of the empire, then published with her name upon the title-page — "Instructions for a Code of Laws" — is a clumsy instance of literary larceny. Catherine wrote nearly the whole of this performance with her own hand. She had two assistants in the task of compilation; and so literally did they pillage the writings of Montesquieu and Beccaria, that a Frenchman who undertook to translate the work thought it the best plan to follow the text of these celebrated authors. The instructions contain 525 articles. They creditably express aversion to imprisonment for debt, tortures, and capital punishments. But their general design is to assert the absolutism of

the sovereign and the duty of passive obedience on the part of the people, while there is a specious recognition of natural rights, and hypocritical regard is paid to civil and religious liberty as an extant blessing. The question of national education is touched upon, and admitted to be important, but considered impossible owing to the multitude of subjects; and parents are exhorted to set a good example to their children. This from Catherine! The ethics of the document may be inferred from the sentence:—"All the *political* vices are not *moral* ones; and all the *moral* vices are not *political* ones."

Upon the completion of the Instructions, the empress repaired to Moscow, whither deputies from all the subject nations had been summoned to attend her. Their presence was not demanded to decide upon the propositions laid before them, but to receive with plaudits the positive affirmations of the sovereign, and deliberate upon a few points of detail left to their discretion. Muscovites and Germans, Samoiedes and Finns, Letts and Cossacks, accordingly assembled. Catherine, in a coach drawn by eight horses, with grooms, running footmen, blacks, and military, followed by a splendid train of courtiers, proceeded to the place of meeting in the Kremlin, where, after divine service, a sermon, an oath administered to the deputies, and complimentary speeches from the magnates, her work was read in a Russ translation from the French in

which it was composed. The reading was frequently interrupted with loud shouts of applause from many who did not care a straw for the fine sounding paragraphs or comprehend their meaning, but who wished to curry favour with the empress and avoid Siberia. The representatives of the poor Samoiedes from the frozen zone alone seem to have conducted themselves with discretion. "We are," said they, "a simple and honest people. We quietly tend our reindeer. We are in no want of new laws, but make them for the Russians, our neighbours, that they may put a stop to their depredations." Catherine was honoured by the subservient assembly with the titles of Great, Wise, Prudent, and Mother of the Country, the last of which she accepted, referring the former to the judgment of posterity. Her manuscript, enclosed in a magnificent case, was placed in the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg; and printed presentation copies were despatched to the sovereigns whose praise she courted. Each deputy received a gold medal in commemoration of the event, a great number of which were speedily in the hands of the goldsmiths. No benefit to the people accrued from this ostentatious performance in improved jurisprudence and diminished oppression. Though a commission was nominated to systematise the laws, its members followed the usual practice with reference to public projects, applying great part of the funds advanced for the purpose to their private use;

while some of them were the illiterate dependent creatures of persons of influence, who were appointed jurisconsults, in order to be provided with a salary. Masson affirms, of his own knowledge, that one of them had never seen the Instructions, and could not have read them if he had.

Deeply imbued with the libertinism of the French school, Catherine was an infidel to all forms of faith, though by necessity of position a conformist to the national communion. Hence her vaunted toleration had no basis in any conviction of right, but sprung from religious indifference; and, influenced by her example, many of the high clergy seem to have held loosely their religious opinions. In 1785 she caused her confessor to give a grand entertainment to the ecclesiastics of all professions, which was repeated annually for several years at the imperial expense, and acquired the the name of the Toleration Dinner. On these occasions, metropolitans, bishops, and archimandrites of the establishment sat check by jowl with Armenian, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran clergy, nor were the representatives of Mohammedism and Buddhism wanting, when Tatar moullahs and Kalmuck priests were present in the capital.

The court of St. Petersburg, at this period, was the most brilliant of any in Europe; but the splendour was of a kind intermediate between the barbaric pomp of Asia and the refinements of European civilisation.

The magnificence was cumbrous; the costly galas had no air of dignity; the men blazed with jewels till they ceased to look like men; and not a few of the most bedizened with diamonds had no more scholarship than clowns. Senseless extravagance and unconcealed methodical profligacy distinguished the empress and her courtiers. Twelve individuals did this base woman openly instal in her palace as intimate minions, under the name of favourites; and appear in public successively attended by them as legitimate husbands. The appointment to the despicable post was made with prescribed formalities, which will not admit of description. Upon some of these associates who occupied the station the longest the revenues of kings were lavished. Their public appearances were made with imperial state; and deference was paid to them by high and low, as if actual monarchs of the realm. Gregory Orlof, the first favourite, went to the congress at Fokshani, with marshals, chamberlains, grooms of the chambers, pages, state carriages, a troop of hussars, and 150 livery servants. But Potemkin, the third, surpassed all the rest in the wealth and honours that were heaped upon him, and in the arrogance of his demeanour. Having rendered himself indispensable to Catherine by flattering her pride, as well as by boldness of character, versatility of genius, and capacity for the highest functions in the cabinet and the army, he retained his influence when personal intimacy ceased; and go-

verned the empire, by adroit management of the sovereign, to the end of his days. This remarkable man was a compound of contradictions, — firm yet fickle, prodigal and paltry, luxurious and hardy, indolent and active, a magnificent satrap and a slovenly boor, dexterous, false, and overbearing. He treated the old nobility as footmen, and made the highest officers fly upon his errands. One of superior rank in his suite, named Bauer, was sometimes sent into Poland to treat with his tenants, to Paris for a dancer, to Astrachan for a water-melon, to Riga for oranges, to the Crimea for grapes, to Moscow for soup, and to St. Petersburg with a message for the empress. Thus almost always travelling post, and anticipating breaking his neck in a helter-skelter journey, an acquaintance made ready an epitaph for him: "Here Bauer lies, beneath this stone. Coachman, drive on!" The history of Potemkin is for sixteen years the history of Russia.

It is estimated that Catherine publicly squandered upon her twelve guilty parasites, in real property, pensions, and gifts, no less a sum than 88,820,000 roubles. There was, in addition, the amount secretly bestowed; while her own ordinary expenditure, with the outlay upon sumptuous palaces, triumphal arches, and imperial entertainments, was enormous. Millions too were lavished in corrupting Poland, bribing Moldavia, and maintaining a system of espionage at Constantinople. If, to meet this drain, she more than doubled the

revenue of the empire and largely gathered spoil from conquered countries, the gains derived from the latter source were more than counterbalanced by the cost of war. She thus brought the empire to the very verge of bankruptcy, and exposed her subjects to intolerable misery and oppression. Unable adequately to maintain the officers of government, whether soldiers or civilians, they had recourse to peculation and tyranny to eke out a salary; and being avaricious of wealth, the screw was unmercifully applied to the people. The colonel of a regiment whose pay was from 70*l.* to 80*l.* per annum, usually contrived to net a profit varying from 1500*l.* to 2000*l.* This was accomplished by claiming free quarters for the troops wherever they were stationed, and pocketing the money advanced for their support. "If he be poor," said the empress, when the case of an indigent officer was brought before her, "it is his own fault: he has long had a regiment!" But the worst result of the imperial profligacy appeared in the moral corruption of the court, where virtue had previously been rare, but which became so thoroughly abandoned, that marriage was commonly contracted as a convenient cover for criminal courses, and the vilest habits were adopted without sense of shame or an effort at concealment. To have submitted to the rule of a foreign woman like Catherine, without the shadow of a title to the throne, stamps Russia at the time as the most debased of nations.

CHAP. XVIII.

EUROPEAN AGGRANDISEMENT OF RUSSIA.

DESIGNS ON POLAND. — PONIATOWSKI ELECTED KING. — PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA AT ST. PETERSBURG. — FIRST PARTITION OF POLAND. — THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. — SECOND PARTITION TREATY. — DIET AT GRODNO. — PROTEST OF ITS MEMBERS. — INSURRECTION UNDER KOSCIUSKO. — FINAL PARTITION. — ANNEXATION OF COURLAND. — FIRST WAR WITH TURKEY. — FLEET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. — VICTORY AT TCHESME. — TREATY OF KAINARDJI. — ANNEXATION OF THE CRIMEA. — DISMEMBERMENT OF TURKEY. — SECOND WAR. — PEACE OF JASSY. — THE CAUCASUS. — HERACLIUS OF GEORGIA. — PERSIAN WAR. — DEATH OF CATHERINE.

No addition had been made to the European part of the empire since the time of Peter I., except that of a small portion of Finland, gained in the reign of Elizabeth. But under Catherine II. its bounds were vastly enlarged on the west and south by three partitions of Poland and two successful wars with Turkey. Ambitious of territorial aggrandisement, the empress early directed her energies to schemes of foreign conquest; and her views were carried out by able but most unscrupulous diplomatists and generals. She looked first in the direction of Poland, a country to which Russia had already dictated two sovereigns; and which was ren-

dered by an absurd constitution, religious dissensions, and nobles open to corruption, incapable of resisting a powerful neighbour. She had no reason to fear opposition from the sovereigns of Prussia and Austria while pursuing the policy of her predecessors; for the respective position of both, when she came to the throne, made each of them anxious to secure her alliance; and when the appropriation of spoil was eventually decided upon, both were eager to further the work of plunder, and share the proceeds. In 1763 the throne of Warsaw became vacant; and the choice of an occupant devolved upon the diet, the monarchy being elective. Most of its members were in favour of a native being elected; and so was Catherine. But her candidate was Poniatowski, who had been one of her guilty associates while she was grand-duchess, a man without capacity except to be a master of ceremonies at court. He was descended from a family of low rank and no fortune, his grandfather having been a farm-bailiff. In search of advancement he left home for Paris and London; and reached St. Petersburg a penniless adventurer in the suite of Williams, the British ambassador. But upon becoming intimate with the future empress, means were found to procure for him the post of minister plenipotentiary from his own country. The envoy made himself ridiculous in the course of the intrigue. While skulking in disguise in the grounds of Oranienbaum, a gigantic Holsteiner, who had

received a hint, arrested him, demanding who he was. At a loss what to say, he avowed himself a German tailor, on a measuring errand for a suit of clothes, which required instant despatch; and begged to be let go. But the officer quietly made a slip-knot in his handkerchief, threw it around his neck, and hauled the incipient majesty of Poland to the guard-house. Though he got out of the scrape without serious personal consequences, his tailoring profession raised the laugh against him; and he was obliged to quit the imperial dominions.

It was not from any personal regard to Poniatowski that Catherine proposed his elevation to the sovereignty; for he had long been discarded from her mind; but because she was aware, from his flimsy character, that if elected, he would be simply a crowned vassal of her own. Upon being reminded that the proud palatines would not recognise a superior in one whose grandsire was a farm-bailiff, she sharply replied, "If he were such himself, I will have him to be king; and king he shall be." To attain this object, or, as her diplomacy expressed it, to secure a "free and legal election," she sent 10,000 bayonets to Warsaw, while Russian and Prussian armies advanced to the frontier, and bribes were administered to the electors. By corruption and coercion her candidate obtained the throne; and the troops which raised him to it were continued in the country, under the pretence of preserving liberty and

order, but really to constrain him to act the part of a puppet, while Repnin, the Russian ambassador, reigned as the viceroy of the empress. In vain was popular indignation expressed, and patriotic confederations formed; for those who agreed in being indignant at the domination of a foreign power, were fatally divided among themselves upon other points, and never could be brought to act extensively in combination. It was also unfortunately the case, that the majority of the Poles were bigoted Roman Catholics, who fanatically opposed the concession of equal political rights to dissidents, whether belonging to the Greek church or to protestant communions; and thus, while alienating from themselves the sympathy of disinterested states, a specious pretext was afforded for foreign interference on behalf of oppressed co-religionists. Upon Poniatowski, or according to his regal name Stanislaus Augustus, at the bidding of his taskmaster Repnin, inclining to the side of concession, a prelate told him to his face, in the presence of the whole court:—"I formerly used to pray to God for your prosperity; my prayer to Him at present is that He would send you to the devil." Hence the famous confederation of Bar, so called from a small town of that name in Podolia where it originated February 29. 1768, was founded for the protection of the Roman Catholic religion, meaning its exclusive recognition, as well as for the rescue of the country from foreign thraldom. Though deficient in regular

troops, arms, ammunition, money, and experience, the confederates engaged in a desperate struggle with the strongly reinforced Russian armies, under Suwarrow and other generals; and 65,000 imperial troops perished before the insurrection was suppressed, while dreadful atrocities were committed on both sides.

For the trouble and cost of giving a king to the nation, and keeping the state in order, compensation was speedily demanded. It was in Catherine's mind from the first, though Repnin, in a manifesto vindicating an arbitrary act, declared her views to be apart from any "interest or pecuniary consideration." Three years after this avowal of disinterestedness, in 1770, the scheme for the first partition of Poland was finally arranged, though not avowed, between Frederick of Prussia and the empress, during a visit paid by Prince Henry, the brother of the former, to St. Petersburg. The political design of this visit was masked by the traveller proceeding to Stockholm, as the stated end of his journey, and there receiving an invitation to extend it to the Russian capital; and by the gorgeous exhibition of artificial volcanoes, magnificent temples, illuminated colonnades, and nocturnal festivals with which Catherine welcomed her guest, as if pleasure were his only object. But there were parties wide awake to what might be transacting in private between prince and empress. "This city," writes Mr. Richardson, then in the family of the British ambassador to St.

Petersburg, "since the beginning of winter, has exhibited a continued scene of festivity and amusements; feasts, balls, concerts, plays, operas, fireworks, and masquerades in constant succession; and all in honour of, and to divert, Prince Henry of Prussia, the famous brother of the present king. Yet he does not seem much diverted. He looks at them as an old cat looks at the gambols of a young kitten; or as one who had higher sport going on in his own mind than the pastime of fiddling and dancing. As the Queen of Sheba had heard of Solomon's 'acts and wisdom,' and 'came to see whether she had heard a true report of them in her own land,' so also this royal prince has come to visit this mighty princess. It may be too that, like the Queen of Sheba, he is come to prove her majesty with 'hard questions.' But do you seriously imagine that this creature of skin and bone should travel through Sweden and Finland, all for the pleasure of seeing the metropolis and Empress of Russia? Other princes may pursue such pastime; but the princes of the house of Brandenburg fly at a nobler quarry. Or is the King of Prussia, as a tame spectator, to reap no advantage from the troubles in Poland? What is the meaning of his late conferences with the Emperor of Germany? Depend upon it, these planetary conjunctions are the forerunners of great events. Time, and perhaps a few months, may unfold the secret."

While settling and guaranteeing to each other their

respective shares of the spoil, the two bandit powers found it impossible to proceed without the consent of Austria, and therefore she was invited to enter into the project, receiving a due proportion of territory in return for aid. "Do you," said Catherine, "gain Austria, and let her amuse France; England I will flatter; Turkey I will frighten!" The empress was already hard at work frightening the Turks; and there was little difficulty in beguiling England with a favourable commercial treaty, as few ministries have ever been more incompetent than those of the early part of the reign of George III. The bait took with Austria; and by the influence of that power, France, though fully awake to the dangerous ambition of Catherine, was diverted from resisting it. Thus Poland was left to be shorn of her proper dimensions by the robber states in her neighbourhood, a treaty of partition, signed in 1772, being enforced by overwhelming armies. By its conditions Russia obtained 3440 square leagues of territory, with 1,500,000 inhabitants; Austria acquired 2700 square leagues, including the valuable salt mines of Wielicza, with a population of 2,500,000; and Prussia took 900 square leagues, with 860,000 souls, which, though by far the smallest portion in extent and population, was not the least important, as it embraced the command of the commerce of the Vistula, and paved the way for the seizure of the great emporium of Dantzic. The iniquity of this spoliation, in a time

of profound peace, was aggravated by the mode in which it was completed; for a helpless king, and as many members of the diet as could be driven together by the bayonet, were compelled to make a formal cession of the territories upon which the violent hand had seized. In return, the project of a new constitution was granted, in which the worst features of the old form of government were retained, in order to render incurable the paralysis of the state, and thus not only secure the thieves in the possession of their plunder, but facilitate further acquisitions. It farcically contained the article, "The government of Poland shall be, and shall continue for ever, a free and independant government;" and in less than four years afterwards, two of the co-partitioning powers came to a private understanding to terminate the existence of the state.

The doom of the kingdom was sealed during a second visit of the Prussian prince to St. Petersburg, in 1776, to arrange some differences which had arisen respecting the boundary-lines of the territories already seized. He had a plan to propose of obviating every difficulty —"The remainder of Poland," said he, "must be partitioned." Catherine at once adopted the idea; and Poniatowski, the phantom-king she had created, on retiring into private life, was to be compensated for the loss of his throne. But it was necessary to proceed with caution, and keep the project in abeyance till cir-

cumstances occurred favourable for its execution. They came with the triumph of republicanism in France.

The French Revolution was a sore discomfiture to Catherine. It convicted her of want of discrimination, for she had patronised the loose philosophy that lay at the root of the popular excesses. If, too, the empress had possessed a conscience, she must have felt that her own daring seizure of irresponsible authority, unjust trespass on the rights of Poland, and use of power for personal profligacy, were intimately connected with the wild crusade against monarchical institutions, and had contributed to render crowned heads cheap on the banks of the Seine. But Catherine had too thoroughly demoralised her nature to be susceptible of other feelings than some vexation with herself for deficient sagacity, and intense abhorrence of the revolution. The bust of Voltaire disappeared from its pedestal in her gallery, and was consigned to a lumber-room. That of Fox shared the same fate for the strenuousness with which he opposed, in the British parliament, a war with France. The American revolution, which had before been extolled, was denounced as a flagrant rebellion. Washington was spoken of as a traitor; and the empress said publicly, that no man of honour could wear the order of Cincinnatus. Her concern for what was called the cause of order she resolved to signalise by executing the projected annihilation of Poland, where the spirit of French republicanism had

expressed itself in a new constitution. Catherine therefore declared war, marched vast armies into the country, drenched its plains with blood, and concluded with Frederick William of Prussia, in 1793, a treaty which confirmed him in the possession of Thorn and Dantzic, while it advanced her own frontier to the centre of Lithuania and Volhynia. Austria had no share in this second partition. As usual, there was a pro-Russian party among the Poles; and Poniatowski was compelled by his dictatress to issue a public declaration that it was necessary to yield to the superiority of her arms. He was also required to make the people parties to their own undoing, by summoning a diet at Grodno to subscribe the treaty. For three successive days the assembly resisted the demands and menaces of the Russian and Prussian ambassadors, till the former, Sievers, sent in a note which closed with the emphatic announcement,—"The undersigned must besides inform the states assembled in the confederate diet, that he thought it of absolute necessity to order *two battalions of grenadiers, with four pieces of cannon, to surround the castle*, under the command of Major-general Rantenfeldt, who is to concert measures with the grand-marshal of Lithuania for securing the *tranquillity of their deliberations*: the undersigned expects that the sitting will not terminate until the demanded signature of the treaty is decided.

"Done at Grodno the 2nd of September, 1793."

Thus coerced, the diet consented to sign the treaty, with the addition of a few clauses, "such only," as its members observed, "as the dictating power itself seemed in pity to approve of." But trusting to the effect of the grenadiers and cannon, unconditioned submission was demanded; and to secure it some of the more prominent defenders of the rights of their country were seized and carried off by the soldiers. For three weeks the diet withstood intimidation and violence, and then yielded under the following protest: — "Surrounded closely by foreign troops on the 2nd of this month, threatened with further invasion, and oppressed by innumerable violences — thus situated, we do declare, in the most solemn manner that, unable to prevent, even with the risk of our lives, the effect of the oppressive force, we leave to our posterity, happier perhaps than ourselves, those means of saving our dear country whereof we are bereft at present; and thus the project sent to us by the Russian ambassador, though contrary to our laws, wishes, and opinions, forced by the above means to accept, we do accept. Done at Grodno the 24th of September. Signed and engrossed in the public records, according to law."

In opposing this spoliation, the patriot Kosciusko displayed those qualities which placed him at the head of an insurrection, March 24. 1794. But though Warsaw was delivered, and signal successes marked the early stages of the revolt, his talents, bravery, and

desperation could be of no avail to save a far inferior force from destruction, when the effective armies of Russia and Prussia were arrayed against him. On the fatal field of Macieowice, October 4., covered with wounds, he fell senseless, with the exclamation on his lips *Finis Poloniæ;* and was conveyed a prisoner to the camp of General Fersen, while few of his followers escaped captivity or the sword. "Between four and five o'clock in the evening," says the accomplished Niemcewicz, who had been previously taken, "we saw a detachment of soldiers approaching head-quarters, and carrying upon a hand-barrow a man half dead. It was General Kosciusko. His head and body, covered with blood, contrasted in a dreadful manner with the livid paleness of his face. He had on his head a large wound from a sword, and three on his back, above the loins, from the thrusts of a pike. He could scarcely breathe. This was very painful to me: the silence, or rather sullen stupor, was, at last, interrupted by the sobs and cries of a grief as violent as sincere." Kosciusko was removed to Russia, and detained a prisoner at St. Petersburg; and Niemcewicz shared the same fate, but in a different prison. The insurrection was finally quelled by Suwarrow, who took Praga, a suburb of Warsaw, the last stronghold of the patriots, with terrible slaughter, November 4., and butchered the people irrespective of age or sex. Poland was now blotted from the map of states by a third treaty of

partition, signed October 24. 1795, which made over the remainder of the kingdom to Russia and the two German powers; and Poniatowski descended from the throne in obedience to the authority that raised him to it, payment of his debts being guaranteed, with a competent annual pension. The automaton, after the decease of the empress, fixed his residence at St. Petersburg, where he died in 1798, while the crown and sceptre of the country over whose fall he presided were removed to Moscow, and are now shown in the Kremlin. It is remarkable that the sceptre is broken in the middle, and the two pieces lie side by side. But whether it has been done by accident or design, no one knows. Thus was accomplished the greatest political crime of modern times, not less remarkable as an act of folly on the part of Prussia and Austria, while the cabinets of the West were culpably remiss in offering no determined resistance to the deed. The destruction of the Polish kingdom removed a barrier out of the way of a daringly aggressive power, cleared the road from Moscow to Berlin and Vienna, brought Russia into closer contact with the rest of Europe; and thus opened a vast field, with a higher theatre, for the exercise of her strength and talents, and for the gratification of her pride, passions, and interests.

Under pain of confiscation of their property and exile, the unfortunate Poles and Lithuanians were compelled to bind themselves individually to the throne

of the empress by a stringent oath of allegiance. "I A. B. promise and swear to God Almighty, by his holy gospel, to be always ready to serve, faithfully and loyally, her imperial majesty the most serene empress, grand lady, Catherine — to go for that purpose to yield up my life, and to shed the last drop of my blood; to pay due and perfect obedience to the commands already issued, or hereafter to issue, from the authorities appointed by her; to fulfil and maintain them all conscientiously to the best of my power; to contribute with all my strength to the maintenance of the peace and quiet which her majesty has established in my country; and to have no communication whatever with the disturbers of that quiet, either mediately or immediately, either publicly or privately, either by actions or advice, and whatever be the particular occasion, circumstance, or cause that may lead to it. I will so conduct myself in all my actions as it behoves me, like a faithful citizen, to behave towards the authorities which her majesty has set over me, as I must answer for it to God and to his terrible judgment. So may God help me, as well in my body as in my soul! In confirmation of the profession made by this oath, I kiss the holy word and the cross of my Saviour."

The final partition of a kingdom and the annexation of a duchy, Courland, transpired in the same year. This province was constituted in the middle ages the patrimony of the grand-masters of the Teutonic knights,

whose descendants of the Kettler family held it as a fief of Poland, to one of whom Peter I. married his niece. The prince celebrated his wedding with such immoderate drinking-bouts that he did not survive the festivities; upon which the czar excluded his brother from the succession, claimed the duchy as a settlement upon the widow, and caused the administration to be carried on in her name. The duchess reigned at Mittau till she ascended the throne of Russia as the Empress Anne; and by her influence with the nobles Biren was raised to the dukedom, but received his investiture in the dignity from Warsaw. During his long exile in Siberia, the affairs of the province were regulated by direct orders from St. Petersburg, till Augustus III. of Poland invested his son prince Charles with the fief, at the express request of the Empress Elizabeth. Upon Biren's recall from banishment, Catherine ordered him to be reinstated, and effected it by force of arms; but in a few years he abdicated in favour of his son Peter, the last duke. Under the oppressive government of this prince, the Courlanders deemed it wiser to acknowledge the direct and open sovereignty of Russia than to have its real but indirect exercise, with the mediate tyranny of a nabob. The feeling in favour of this change was fostered by the agents of the empress; and by inviting the duke to St. Petersburg, as if to confer with him on state affairs, she provided a convenient opportunity for carrying the measure into

effect. Availing themselves of his absence, the estates assembled, and by a formal act, March 18. 1795, made over Courland, Semigallia, and the circle of Pilten to the rule of Catherine. In her capital the duke learnt, from the lips of a deputation of his own subjects, that they had deprived him of his dominions. By this cession the seaboard of the empire on the Baltic was extended from the neighbourhood of Riga to Memel; and the ports of Libau and Wendau were acquired.

In advancing the empire towards the heart of Europe, and extending its hold upon the Baltic, the empress realised the design of Peter I., and placed Russia in a commanding position among the states of the continent. With the same energy, perseverance, and success, she carried out his projects in the south, with reference to the Black Sea, and access through its waters to the Mediterranean, though she failed in the ultimate object of her ambition — the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire.

Two great wars were waged in the reign with Turkey, both of which were disastrous to it; and singularly enough, both were declared by the defeated party, though ample provocation was given by the successful power. The first extended over nearly six years, from 1768 to 1774; and heaped inexpressible calamities upon the inhabitants of the countries of the Dniester, the Pruth, and the Danube. It was strongly urged by France upon the Porte with a view to save Poland from en-

croachment; and the sultan engaged in it as an ally of that kingdom, and one of the guarantees for its independence. But in an evil hour for Mustapha III. and his dominions, the mufti issued his "fetvah" declaring hostilities lawful. Catherine made prodigious efforts to carry on the contest with vigour both by land and sea; and for the first time in the history of the empire, a Russian fleet sailed to the Mediterranean. It was designed to co-operate with the Greeks of the Morea, the Archipelago, and the Sclavonian subjects of the sultan who were of the Greek religion, among whom the agents of the empress freely scattered gold and promises to excite an insurrection. Alexis Orlof was appointed high admiral, with his brother Feodore for second in command, neither of whom had the slightest nautical knowledge, but were not indisposed to acquire fame through the skill of others. The real command devolved upon Admiral Spiridof, supported by British officers, Elphinstone, Greig, Dugdale, and Tate; and foreign seamen, British, Dutch, and Danish, formed the effective part of the crews. The fleet sailed in 1769, in two divisions, from the ports of Revel and Archangel, consisting altogether of fifteen ships of the line, six frigates, and a number of transports. It gained the Archipelago in the following year, after having experienced great difficulty on the voyage, owing to storms, and the incapacity of those on board who assumed authority. But a kind of pioneer to the

armament, the "Successful Hope," was the first Russian vessel to enter the Mediterranean.

No decisive incidents marked the war till the campaign of 1770, when Romanzow gained the two great victories which rendered his name illustrious, the battle of Larga on the Pruth, and of Kahul near its junction with the Danube; while other generals reduced Bender, after a long siege, Otchakow, Ismailof, and Akerman. In addition to these successes, the squadron in the Archipelago triumphed over the Turkish fleet in the channel between the island of Chios and Asia. In the engagement the ships of both the hostile commanders caught fire, and were blown up, the admirals and a few of the officers alone escaping. Night terminated the action, to the manifest disadvantage of the Turks, who imprudently ran their vessels into the narrow and shallow bay of Tchesme, where some of them were speedily aground, while the rest were so closely packed together as to have no room to manœuvre. In this position, they were blockaded through the following day, while arrangements were made to attempt the destruction of the whole fleet, by means of fire-ships. The bold and hazardous enterprise was crowned with complete success, for not a single vessel escaped the flames, except a few which were towed away, after being abandoned. Elphinstone, Greig, and Dugdale conceived and executed this exploit. The latter steered alone the fire-ship which commenced the conflagration,

being deserted by the Russians who were to accompany him at the very moment of starting. But Orlof appropriated to himself the whole honour of the achievement, and was substantially rewarded for having annihilated for the time the Turkish navy. He received the title of Tchesmensky; a palace was erected to commemorate his victory; and he speedily posted to St. Petersburg upon a temporary visit, to figure in its saloons as a hero. This expedition to the Mediterranean was in itself a most politic measure on the part of Catherine; and, had it been effectively executed, it might have fatally disorganised the empire of the sultan. But owing to the haughtiness and incapacity of the mock-admiral, together with the want of a sufficient military force, the special design of the armament was not only a signal failure, but a sore misfortune to the Greeks. They rebelled in expectation of adequate support, and fell upon the Turks in their neighbourhood with inhuman cruelty. But not being able to sustain an insurrection of themselves when assailed by the Ottoman forces, they were savagely slaughtered in return; while the few auxiliary Russians took to their ships and left them to their fate.

It required prodigious efforts on the part of the cabinet of St. Petersburg to carry on the war while occupied at the same time with the first partition of Poland, and distracted by the plague at Moscow, the flight of the Kalmucks, and the rebellion of Pugatchef.

But it was brought to a successful close by the renewed triumphs of Romanzow on the Danube, who enforced the hard conditions of the treaty of Kainardji in the summer of 1774, and gained for the empire a maritime frontier on the south, with direct access to the commerce of the Levant. By its terms Russia obtained the tract of country lying between the Dnieper and the Bug; and the latter river was made the general boundary between the two powers. She acquired also Kinburn, Taganrog, and Azof, with Yenikale and Kertch in the Crimea; the free navigation of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, and the Dardanelles; and the Crimea was declared independent under the government of its own khan. Catherine, exulting in the success of her arms, went in state to Moscow to celebrate a triumph; heard *Te Deum* in the cathedral; made a pilgrimage on foot to a convent, as a right orthodox empress, followed by all her court; and publicly bestowed magnificent rewards upon the victorious commanders. Nor was she slow to turn advantages to account. In 1778 General Hannibal founded Cherson on the north bank of the liman of the Dnieper, as a commercial port and naval station, which soon became an important town, and sent out ill-built ships to navigate the Euxine, the germs of that fleet which now lies "five fathom deep" in the harbour of Sebastopol. Though Cherson, owing to natural disadvantages, rapidly declined in favour of the new ports, Nicolaief founded in 1791, and Odessa in

1796, great interest attaches to it as the place where Howard terminated his benevolent career and Potemkin found an unmarked grave.

About the time that the treaty of Kainardji was signed, the bold and unprincipled Potemkin rose to the post of favourite; and made it his chief object to nurse the ambition of the empress, in order to maintain his influence, aggrandise his fortune, and gratify a natural restlessness of disposition. Sovereign and subject agreed in opinion, that all the moral vices are not political ones; and both acted with reference to the treaty, as if truth and honour, however useful in private life, were follies in the policy of states. Its articles were not so much evaded as directly violated, almost immediately after they had been ratified in the most solemn manner; and, without sense of shame, insult was offered to open deliberate faithfulness. The Crimea, wrested from Turkey, was wanted by Russia, as indispensable to the sovereignty of the Black Sea, and a convenient stepping-stone to Constantinople; and in less than two years after it was declared "entirely independent of every foreign power" the Russian troops entered, dethroned the khan, and appointed a successor disposed to place himself under the protection of the empire. The tool became a victim. In April 1783 Catherine declared by manifesto the Crimea, with the island of Taman and all the Kuban, for ever annexed to her dominions: and in the same month

Paul Potemkin, a cousin of the minister, inaugurated her reign over the peninsula by the cold-blooded massacre of 30,000 of its malcontent inhabitants. The empress restored to the new province its ancient classical name of Taurida; and sometimes dated her manifestoes from the year of its annexation. One addressed to the Poles, at the time of the second partition, closes with, "Given in the city of St. Petersburg, our imperial residence, the 24th of April 1793, of the birth of Jesus Christ; of our dominion over all the Russias the 31st; and over Taurida the 10th." Proud of having stretched her frontier to the Black Sea, so long an Ottoman lake, she determined to look upon its waters, and made a hurried journey to the south in 1787 for the purpose. On the route she read the significant inscription which Potemkin posted up at Cherson, "The way to Byzantium;" and passed a night in the newly-founded Sebastopol, leaving her name to the street, near the harbour, which the shot and shell of the Anglo-French have now reduced to ruins.

The dismemberment of the Ottoman empire was not a vague dream of ambition with Catherine and Potemkin, but a project seriously contemplated and deliberately planned, with full confidence of success. During her visit to the Crimea, the empress was attended by the German Emperor Joseph II.; and the two potentates confirmed a compact previously made

between them, to combine their forces in a grand attack upon the Turks, drive them into Asia, and divide their European inheritance. The details of the scheme are not known with certainty. But while satisfying Austria with a due share of spoil, Catherine intended to place her second grandson Constantine upon the throne of Constantinople, as the head of a revived Greek dominion; and thus establish in her own family two mighy empires, with capitals on the Neva and the Bosphorus, capable of domineering over Europe and Asia. In order to conciliate France, an offer of Egypt was made to that power, but the bait was declined. It is curious to find in our own day the Emperor Nicholas so closely treading in the steps of his grandmother as to present the same sop to England with reference to the same designed spoliation, though he generously agreed to throw in Candia, as an additional crumb. "If," said he to Sir H. Seymour, "in the event of a distribution of the Ottoman succession upon the fall of the empire, you should take possession of Egypt, I shall have no objection. I would say the same thing of Candia: that island might suit you, and I do not know why it should not become an English possession."

The second war with Turkey, intended to batter down the empire, lasted from 1787 to 1792; and was marked by brilliant victories on the side of the Russians, bloody massacres, and most insignificant

results. Potemkin, the generalissimo, revelled like a satrap in his camp, and gained the glory, while subordinates, Suwarrow, Repnin, and Kutasof, fought the battles and conducted the sieges. Success was with him a crime unless he was near enough to appropriate it to himself. "You little martinest priest," said he to Repnin, who won the crowning victory in his absence, "how dare you to undertake such things? who gave you any such orders?" Emboldened by his triumph, the latter replied, "I have served my country; my head is not at your disposal; and you are a devil whom I defy." So saying, he left the room, and slammed the door in the face of the Muscovite vizier, who was preparing for a display of pugilism. Exhaustion on both sides enforced the peace of Jassy, which, instead of delivering over the keys of Constantinople to Catherine, simply advanced her frontier over the dreary country from the Bug to the Dniester, and confirmed her protectorate over Georgia and Mingrelia. It has been calculated that in this single war Russia lost 200,000 men, and expended 200,000,000 of roubles; that Austria lost 130,000 men, and expended 300,000,000 of florins; and that Turkey lost 330,000 men, and expended 250,000,000 of piastres,—making a grand total of 660,000 lives sacrificed at the shrine of a mortified ambition. But taking into the account the numbers who perished in the former war, in Poland, and other quarters, Catherine must rank with the Tamerlanes of

history, as one of the greatest scourges of the human race that ever existed. Potemkin, worn out by the fire of his passions and the unbridled indulgence of his vices, did not live to witness the conclusion of peace. Assailed with fever, while the negotiations were in process, he left Jassy for the recovery of his health; but had scarcely accomplished a few versts when he was lifted from his carriage, and expired by the highway in the steppes of Bessarabia. His predecessor in court favour and power, Gregory Orlof, died a few years before him, insane, at Moscow.

While the empire was extended in the direction of the Danube, an encroaching and aggressive policy was pursued in the Caucasian isthmus. When the empress Anne relinquished the acquisitions of Peter I. on the shores of the Caspian, the mouth of the Terek became the frontier towards Persia; and a line of forts was carried along the river for its defence. Russia had then no practical hold upon any of the nations of the Caucasus, though friendly relations had long been maintained at intervals with Georgia. The mountaineers were either independent, or subject to Persia and Turkey. But under the empress Elizabeth a curious attempt was made to bring the Ossetines, who occupied the upper valleys of the Terek, into subjection to the empire by converting them to its religion. This project originated with the clergy, who plainly avowed a motive secular enough for the enterprise. "The

Ossetines," said they in a petition to the empress, "a nation rich in gold and silver, who inhabit the Caucasian highlands, and who, since the overthrow of the kingdom of Georgia by the Turks and the Persians, are left without a master, were formerly converted to the Christian religion, but they have unfortunately relapsed into Paganism. Some travellers, who have visited their country, inform us that they are very anxious to return to Christianity." In consequence of this representation, a commission of ecclesiastics was appointed to meet near the frontier; and a convent was finally built in the highlands, in which missionary priests were established. Their labours were confined to baptising the natives. It was soon observed that those who submitted to the ceremony repeatedly presented themselves as candidates, because the Russian government granted to every convert a certain amount of coarse linen, some salt fish, and a metallic cross. Re-baptism, which the wild race had the means of enforcing, being unprofitable work, and no gold or silver existing in the country, the mission was abandoned.

The sword, instead of the cross, was directed towards the Caucasus during the reign of Catherine, while intrigue was busy with some of the princes. After seizing the Kuban, those military establishments were systematically commenced upon its banks which, being connected with the chain on the Terek, form a complete line of defence on the north of the mountains, extending

through nearly 1000 versts, or 667 miles, from the Black Sea to the Caspian. The fort of Anapa on the coast of Circassia, was taken from the Turks in 1791, though restored to them at the peace; and the Cossacks of the Dnieper were removed to the Kuban, to garrison its redoubts and fortresses, receiving the name of Tchernomorski, or Cossacks of the Black Sea. But the greatest advance to power in the grand isthmus was made by a secret negotiation between Catherine and Heraclius of Georgia, by virtue of which, the prince aided her in the first war with Turkey, and finally in 1783 threw off the sovereignty of Persia, acknowledging himself the vassal of Russia. The czarina guaranteed to him and his posterity, not only his present possessions, but even his future acquisitions, and promised to defend him against all his enemies; in consequence of which, a Russian garrison was admitted to Tiflis, his capital. This step was fatal to his dynasty. Upon the terrible Aga Mohammed Khan establishing his power over Persia, he summoned the Georgian to return to his allegiance; and meeting with a refusal, he pounced upon his territory in 1795 with an overpowering force. In vain were messengers sent to the Russian frontier on the north of the Caucasus for assistance. The commanders had no disposable troops. Even had that not been the case, they could not have acted without orders from St. Petersburg, at the distance of nearly 1800 miles; and no relieving army could

then march directly across the mountains, but must turn them by the longer route of 400 miles along the shore of the Caspian, the military road by the pass of Dariel not having been constructed. Thus poor Heraclius, a man of four-score years, found his dependence upon Russia a fatal snare. He saved himself and his family by flight to the more difficult highlands, while his capital was taken, and its principal inhabitants, especially the females, were carried off into captivity.

Though in the sixty-sixth year of her age, Catherine resolved to draw the sword from its scabbard against Persia. Her object was not to aid the Georgian prince, as the invaders had retired from his country, and he had returned to his capital. But, still clinging to the dream of founding an Oriental empire, she indulged the wild expectation of either reaching Constantinople by the Caucasian isthmus, or of passing by the gorgeous Ispahan to the "wealth of Ind." But having at the same time an army assembled in Gallicia under Suwarrow, intended to join the European crusade against French republicanism, she found her means utterly inadequate to prosecute the new war. Still a force was mustered on the Terek, under the command of "our dearest and tenderly beloved Count Zubof," as the old beldame styled an incompetent favourite, who with presumptuous confidence accepted proposals for the establishment of an East India Company on the

shores of the Caspian, of which he nominated himself the head. The troops marched by Derbent to Baku, where their course was peremptorily arrested by a courier from the north with the intelligence that Catherine was no more.

The autumn was passing into winter in the year 1796, when a bright meteor was observed by the inhabitants of St. Petersburg. It appeared to descend, explode, and vanish over the fortress which contained the tombs of the sovereigns. The natural apparition was the common talk of the city; and some tremblingly whispered that it portended an approaching change on the throne, for none dare openly connect death with the name of Catherine. She rose as usual on the morning of November 5., took her coffee, despatched business, and withdrew to a private apartment. Not returning for some time, an attendant tapped at the door, but no answer was given. On opening it, he saw the empress stretched upon the floor, not dead, but quite unconscious, struck down by apoplexy. Her hopeless condition was not known to the household or the court for some hours; and then it was mentioned with reserve and mysterious caution, lest there should be a mistake. "You might see," says Masson, "two courtiers meet each other, both perfectly acquainted with the circumstance of the apoplexy, yet questioning one another, answering in turn, watching each other's looks, and cautiously advancing step by step, that they might arrive both to-

gether at the terrible point, and be able to talk of what both already knew. It is necessary to have frequented a court, and especially the court of Russia, to be able to judge of the importance of these things, and exculpate the historian from the charge of absurdity for relating actual circumstances." No one was allowed to quit the city except the messengers despatched to Gatshina for the Grand-Duke Paul, who reached the capital in the evening. Catherine lingered through the night and the next day, while ministers, placemen, and place-women brooded over impending changes. She moved one of her feet, and pressed the hand of an attendant, but never spoke a word. About ten o'clock at night, thirty-seven hours after the attack, the death-rattle began; and with a wild shriek, which was heard in the neighbouring apartments, the Messalina of the North expired.

CHAP. XIX.

TRAGEDY OF THE MAD CZAR.

PAUL AND CATHERINE.—REVIVED MEMORY OF PETER III.—LIBERATION OF KOSCIUSKO.—EARLY MEASURES OF PAUL.—SLAVISH PERSONAL HOMAGE.—ABSURD ALTERATIONS.—CRUSADE AGAINST ROUND HATS.—DRESS OF THE ARMY.—RECALL AND EXILE OF SUWARROW—HIS RE-APPOINTMENT AND CHARACTER.—THE RUSSIANS IN ITALY—THEIR MARCH ACROSS THE ALPS.—SUWARROW'S RETURN AND DEATH.—PAUL AND NAPOLEON.—VIEWS ON INDIA.—ASSASSINATION OF PAUL.

THE new sovereign, Paul, came to the throne in the forty-third year of his age, during thirty-four of which, or while his mother reigned, he had been treated by her more like a state delinquent than a son. She not only excluded him from participation in public affairs, but could not even endure his presence, exposed him to humiliation, and kept him poor, while a set of worthless men younger than himself were gorged with millions of roubles and loaded with honours. To avoid insulting neglect, he lived as much as possible away from the capital, at Gatshina, or some other country seat, drilling a few battalions of soldiers, an occupation

which was a ruling passion. In early life he displayed good sense, a taste for the sciences, and a disposition rather amiable than otherwise; but gross ill-usage blighted these favourable germs of character, and he grew up suspicious of every one, the creature of caprice, irritable, and violent. Catherine's aversion to him has been considered a proof of his being actually the son of Peter III.; but the reflection which she must have often indulged, that her reign was a usurpation of his just rights, contributed not a little to the dislike. So far did she carry her cruelty, that his wife, the Princess Marie of Wurtemberg, niece of Frederick the Great, was always removed to one of the imperial palaces for her confinement, while the children were separated from their parents and brought up under the superintendence of the empress. Of these children, eight in number when Paul ascended the throne, Alexander, afterwards emperor, was in his nineteenth year; Constantine, of notoriety in Poland, was seventeen; and Nicholas, the late czar, was a babe in arms. Owing to the estrangement between Catherine and her son, it has been supposed that if she had been able to dictate a will in her last moments she would have excluded him from the succession and nominated her grandson Alexander. "Happily for Paul," says one, "the power of speech was gone for ever." But had he remained in private life, it would have been a most fortunate circumstance for himself, his subjects, and successor.

In justice to this ill-fated monarch, it ought to be stated that, notwithstanding injurious treatment, he never forgot the respect due to Catherine as his mother and his sovereign, though he might with success at times have imitated her violent usurpation of the throne. But immediately after her death he gave ample evidence of intensely embittered feeling, by exhuming the remains of his unfortunate father from an obscure grave, and reinterring them along with those of his mother in the imperial sepulchre. While this was a measure repugnant in itself to right feeling, it was rendered additionally so by the ostentatious publicity with which it was conducted. Yet there was great sublimity in the vengeance inflicted upon the two murderers, Orlof and Baratinsky, who were compelled to officiate as chief mourners by the coffin of their victim during the lying in state, and then followed it to the tomb. Not content with these funeral honours, Paul commendably instituted an inquiry after the favourite officers and friends of his father, who still survived, and sent for them to court. Upon Baron Sternberg, formerly aide-de-camp to Peter III., making his appearance, he was warmly welcomed. "Have you," said the emperor, "heard what I am doing for my father?" "Yes, sire," answered the general, "I have heard it with astonishment." "With astonishment! Why? is it not a duty I had to fulfil? See," continued he, turning to a picture of Peter, which

he had already hung up against the wall, "I will have him to witness my gratitude towards his faithful friend." So saying, he invested him with the riband of St. Alexander, and made him general-in-chief. All pictures of Peter had been proscribed both in the imperial palaces and private houses. They were now sought after in lumber-rooms, and the painters of the capital could with difficulty supply the demand for copies.

The conduct of the emperor to his own family delighted every one. To the Empress Marie, a beautiful and estimable woman, who was the first individual to pay him homage, he assigned a suitable revenue; Alexander he proclaimed czarevitch; and conferred marks of kindness upon his other children. Kosciusko and all the other Polish prisoners of war, some of whom had endured hard bondage, were immediately set at liberty. The patriot leader had been allowed to live in a private house of the capital, under the charge of an officer, and was still suffering from the severity of his wounds. Paul went in person to announce his freedom, and took him to the palace, where he was introduced to the empress. Being offered a location in Russia, with a number of peasants, Kosciusko declined the gift, but accepted the means of transporting himself to America, to live and die in independence. Niemcewicz, who was confined in the fortress, where he suffered dreadfully from the want of air and exercise, gives a piquant account of his own deliverance. Upon the

officer of the guard entering his cell, "he immediately ordered the soldier to leave the room, and said, 'As a proof of my attachment to you, I will entrust you with a secret of the greatest importance.' 'What is it?' said I, with an astonished air. He bowed low. 'Our immortal sovereign has deigned to die.' At this I scarcely refrained from bursting out into laughter, but soon feigning an exclamation of surprise, 'Is it possible?' said I, 'when? how?' 'Several days ago, and after a short illness; but such was the will of St. Nicholas; we must be humbly resigned to it; it is a great loss, but I hope the emperor will indemnify us for it.' 'Do you think that event will bring any change in our fate?' He remained silent for a long time. 'You will not betray me?' said he then, in a low voice. 'No,' said I, 'I give you my word for it.' Although there was nobody in my room yet he approached to my ear, and said, in a very low tone of voice, 'The soldiers who brought your dinner to-day informed me that they were told not to come for it any more, as you were expected yourself to-night in town.'" Niemcewicz shared for a time the fortunes of his chief, and long survived him, terminating an active literary career at Paris in 1841, at the advanced age of eighty-four.

The first measures of Paul gave satisfaction to the people, and inspired general confidence. He instantly countermanded the expedition against Persia, expressed a pacific policy, and revoked a levy which had been

ordered for recruits. He continued the public officers at their posts; stopped the multiplication of assignats and the debasement of the coin; put the expenditure of the court upon an economical footing; and conferred an important boon upon the state by regulating the succession to the throne. The descent of the crown had hitherto been determined by the arbitrary will of the sovereign, or by force and intrigue. It was now vested in the eldest son and his male issue; and, this line failing, in the second son and his male descendants, according to the practice of most European states. In default of males, the females and their children were to succeed in the same order. In case the lawful heir was in possession of a foreign crown, he was to renounce it, or the throne passed to the next heir. In the instance of a minority the reigning sovereign was to appoint a regent; but, if he failed to do so, the regency devolved to the mother of the minor, and to the nearest relative if there were no dowager empress. The majority of the sovereign was fixed at sixteen years. But the emperor speedily afforded ample proof that he acted from caprice or passion, not from principle. Hence he passed at a single bound from economy to profuse expenditure; discarded without a reason the officers he had retained without a motive; rewarded and punished in the same day the same individuals, without overt acts accounting for the change; and visited with tremendous severities those who trans-

gressed some petty law of etiquette so recently promulgated as not to be known except in the precincts of the court. His freaks were so strange as fully to justify the conclusion, that he was an insane man with lucid intervals, whose derangement was intensely developed by the possession of power.

One of his first cares was to revive in all its integrity the slavish homage formerly paid to the autocrats of the country, their wives and children. In the barbarous times of the empire it was the custom, upon meeting any member of the royal house, for every person, from the serf to the boyard, to go down upon his knees in the snow or in the mud. Peter I. opposed this degradation of his subjects, ordered those who prostrated themselves before him to be caned, and stopped to thrash them himself. Catherine completely abolished the practice, but Paul restored it with additional rigour, till a meeting with the emperor was avoided as a disaster. At his levees he was not satisfied with ordinary kisses of the hand and genuflexions, but a distinctly audible smack was required, with a knock from the knee upon the floor as loud as if a soldier had been grounding his musket. Even when not present himself, and foreigners visited the palaces and gardens, they were compelled to remain uncovered, no matter how bleak the wind, as if in the temples of religion. It was a bitterly cold day when a solemn mass was performed at the Roman Catholic

church on occasion of the decease of the Duke of Wurtemberg, the father of the empress. Paul took the command of a body of troops posted round the church to maintain order, as it was not in character for him to appear in the interior. His horse being restive, he galloped to and fro in the street. The spectators took off their hats and bowed themselves as he approached; but put them on again, owing to the weather, when he had retired some distance. He soon spied this out, ordered the soldiers to surround a group, and march them off to prison. From fifty to sixty of the common people were whipped for three successive days for not properly reverencing the earthly deity, while some officers among them were degraded to the ranks.

Detesting republicanism,—about the only feeling he shared in common with his mother,—Paul issued a ukase strictly enjoining all tradesmen to efface from the front of their shops the French word *magasin*, and substitute the Russian word *lavra* (shop). He also forbade the Academy of Sciences to use the word "revolution" when speaking of the courses of the heavenly bodies; and enjoined the players to employ the word "permission" instead of "liberty" in their bills. A curious interdict appeared, by which it was prohibited, under pain of the knout, for any one to make use of the term "snub" in speaking of the nose, or "bald" in speaking of the head. His own nasal

organ was of that conformation, and his pate had no resemblance to Absalom's. A poor soldier, writhing under the lash administered by his orders for a trifling fault in exercise, cried out in his agony, "Cursed bald-head! cursed bald-head!" upon which the enraged autocrat gave orders that he should expire under the knout. Paul was one of the ugliest men in his extensive dominions. He was short and swarthy, with a decided Kalmuck cast of countenance. "What a fright!" "How ugly he is!" exclaimed the French women when he visited Paris in his youth. He had then the good sense to laugh at such observations; but, after his temper had been soured, and power had come into his hands, woe betide him who reflected upon the imperial physiognomy. The appearance of the empress by his side has been compared to that of one of those beautiful women who are often painted with a little deformed blackamoor near them, as a contrast to their dignity and grace.

Paul's monomania appeared most conspicuously in affairs of man-millinery. He had a great abhorrence of round hats, and ordered them to be taken away from the heads of those who wore them. This led to many a scuffle in the streets, for before the imperial mind was known upon the subject the soldiers and police began to uncover heads and beat those who, not aware of the reason, attempted to defend themselves. An Englishman, having his hat taken away from him,

folded his arms, observing to the officer or police, "Ah! friend, how I pity thee for being a Roossian." But another, who was stopped in his sledge and uncovered, jumped out, supposing it an attempt at robbery, and knocked down the soldier. He was soon overpowered, bound, and carried off to prison. The British ambassador at length interfered, and Paul issued a notice that foreigners who were not in his service or naturalised were not included in the prohibition. Still the interdicted head-dress was a nuisance to those who appeared in it, for they were liable to be stopped in order to have their country ascertained. The Russians, compelled to wear cocked hats, speedily emptied the hatters' shops of those articles, and were then obliged to conform their round hats to the prescribed shape in the best way they could. But, not content with turning his attention to the hatting business, the emperor meddled with the profession of tailors and drivers. He issued various ukases which prohibited the wearing of frock-coats, waistcoats without sleeves, and pantaloons; forbade horses to be harnessed to the sledges and carriages in the ancient manner, substituting a new fashion; and directed all the post-stations in his dominions to be painted red.

But the officious czar was most intent upon changes in the dress and exercise of the troops, to which importance seemed to be attached in proportion to their frivolity. Three or four hours every morning he

devoted to drilling the guard after a fashion of his own, wearing no furs, though the cold might be several degrees below zero, but habited in a plain deep-green uniform, immense jack-boots, and a vast hat. Of course his staff had to follow his example; and a bitter trial was the daily guard-parade to officers and men. After drill the grave affairs of the shape of sword, belts, caps, boots, spatterdashes, cockades, and queues occupied his leisure. To the disgust of the army he ordered the ancient military costume of Germany to be adopted. The soldiers were therefore required to wear a false tail, clot their hair with powder and pomatum, and put on long black gaiters or spatterdashes, which pinched their legs, and tried their temper from the multitude of buttons. It must have been an amusing scene when old Suwarrow, in command of the army in Galicia, assembled to march against the French, received a box from St. Petersburg containing hair powder, a number of little sticks moulded into models of the tails and side curls to be adopted. "Hair-powder," said he, "is not gunpowder, curls are not cannon, and tails are not bayonets." This pleasantry is said to have led to his recal, but the fact of his having been Catherine's favourite-general sufficiently accounts for his dismissal by his successor. The veteran took leave of the troops in a characteristic manner. He drew them up in order of battle, raised a pyramid of cymbals and drums in front of the line, and, richly decorated with all his

orders of merit, stood by it to address the men; then, depositing his helmet, sword, and other insignia of active service on the pyramid, he said, "Comrades, a time will probably come when Suwarrow shall re-appear amongst you; he will then resume these spoils which he leaves to you, and which he always wore in his victories."

The time referred to was not long in coming. Suwarrow retired to Moscow, where he had a house of his own; but, being an object of curiosity, attracting crowds after him whenever he went abroad, Paul ordered him to be removed to a distant village. Four hours were allowed him to arrange his affairs. "Oh!" said he, "this is too kind! an hour is sufficient for Suwarrow." Upon the officer of police bringing a carriage to the door he looked at it with contempt. "Suwarrow has no need of a coach to go into exile," he remarked, "he can repair thither in the same equipage which he made use of to repair to the court of Catherine or to the head of the armies; bring me a cart!" In this vehicle, stretched upon a mattress, wrapped in his cloak, he performed a journey of 500 versts to the appointed village, and took up his abode in a wooden hut, under the superintendence of a guard. He was not allowed to see visitors or write letters; but one eventually came to hand, under the imperial seal, addressed to "Field-Marshal Suwarrow." The exiled warrior remarked to the courier, "This letter is not for me; if Suwarrow were

field-marshal he would not be banished to a village, he would be seen at the head of the army." He refused to receive the letter; and the courier took it back unopened to the emperor.

Upon Paul resolving to join the coalition against France he was persuaded by his allies to recal Suwarrow, whose fame was European, in order to make him generalissimo of his forces. Though highly irritated by his conduct, he suppressed his resentment, and ordered him to repair to St. Petersburg. Finding himself reinstated at the head of the army, Suwarrow buried his own injuries in oblivion; and, anxious to cope with the French, he rapidly advanced with the first division of his troops to co-operate with the Austrians in Italy, taking there the command of the allied forces. No man had ever more unbounded influence over his own soldiers. It was obtained not so much by his military genius, which they could not appreciate, nor by his dauntless intrepidity, a quality by no means rare; but by the rough manners and hardy habits which made him one of themselves, and by connecting the familiarity of a comrade with the strict discipline of a commander. He carefully adapted himself also to their religious prejudices and superstitions, so that they cheerfully threw themselves into the jaws of death at his bidding, regarding him as being quite as much entitled to be styled St. Suwarrow as the field-marshal of that name. While on the

march, he would not allow the army to pass by crosses and images along the high road without genuflexions and prayers. Upon encountering a priest he set the example of saluting his reverence, and beseeching a blessing upon his arms. He wore sacred relics about his person by way of amulets; visited churches and convents with a solemn air; made every war appear a peculiarly holy one to his soldiers; and shamefully revived, to stimulate their courage, a gross piece of fanaticism, formerly prevalent among the Russian peasantry, that every one who died in fight for his religion would find himself alive again in three days, snugly ensconced at home, and for ever free from the obligation of military service. Thus excited, the army followed him with invincible ardour wherever he led them; and in 1799, for the first time in history, the war cries of Russia—"*Perod! Perod!* Forward! Forward!" "*Nieboss! Nieboss!* Never fear! Never fear!"—were heard on the plains of Lombardy, the ridges of the Apennines, and the heights of the Alps.

Great curiosity, with not a little fear, was excited among the populations of Southern Germany and Northern Italy by the appearance of the Russian troops. Rumours had represented them as not merely savages, but monsters and ogres, of scarcely human shape, armed with the strangest weapons. "We shall see," said a French soldier, marching to the first *rencontre*, "whether they have four arms; and observed, upon his

return, "Well! they have but two, and know not how to make use of them." Those qualities for which the Russian soldier has since been best known—endurance and a quiet resignation to death—were eminently displayed in the campaign. The Cossacks strongly attracted the attention of their adversaries. "I have seen," says one of the French generals, "on the right bank of the Limmat, while our army kept the left, posts of Cossacks squatted together in the most grotesque manner. They were seen to eat raw the aliments which are very carefully dressed in civilised countries, such as meat, pumpkins, and cucumbers. The French music came occasionally and played warlike airs on the banks, not long since so happy, of this beautiful Limmat. At such times these Cossacks would rise spontaneously to dance in a ring, while the sentinel they had in front stood leaning on his lance, motionless as a statue. On seeing for the first time these strange soldiers, I recalled to mind the travels and the Hottentots of Le Vaillant or of Abyssinian Bruce." In this first conflict between French and Russian both parties had old notions corrected, and received new views with reference to each other.

In April Suwarrow opened the campaign in Lombardy on the Adda, intending to fight his way across the Alps into France, and march to the gates of Paris. His successes were brilliant, for in little more than three months nothing remained to the French of

the conquests of Napoleon in Northern Italy but a few fortresses. Paul, in ecstasies at his victories, gave him the surname of Italiensky, and ordered him by a special ukase to be regarded universally as the greatest commander that had ever appeared. But, being directed to enter Switzerland to co-operate with a new Russian army on the Upper Rhine, the sun of Suwarrow's glory set without any dishonour to himself. He forced the pass of St. Gothard in September while an active enemy disputed the difficult ground inch by inch, dashed through the foaming Reus in the rocky gorge of the Unerloch, and descended its valley to the Lake of Lucerne. Here, instead of being reinforced, as he expected, he heard of the almost entire annihilation of the new Russian army at Zurich by Massena; and found himself in imminent danger of being surrounded on all sides by the French, who were rapidly drawing their lines around him, to cut off all chance of escape. Suwarrow extricated his army by one of the most extraordinary marches ever accomplished by a military force. With the shepherds and chamois hunters of the High Alps for guides, the soldiers passed through narrow paths over the mountains, often in single file, barefoot, and knee-deep in snow, with no covering from the commencing wintry tempests, and no trees with which to kindle bivouac fires. To men from a country of interminable plains, diversified only with paltry hillocks, it must have been passing strange and almost awful to

find themselves scaling the sublime pinnacles of nature, with tremendous gorges beneath them, and heights still towering above, alternately hidden and revealed by the passing clouds. Great numbers perished by cold, hunger, and fatigue. The survivors descended into the valley of the Upper Rhine, having left behind them all their beasts of burden, baggage, and artillery. From extreme exultation occasioned by the brilliant opening of the campaign Paul passed to irrational anger at its disastrous close. He recalled the wreck of the army, deprived Suwarrow of his command, and would not see him on his return to St. Petersburg. This act of injustice broke the spirit of the veteran; he repaired to the house of one of his nephews, retired to bed, and never rose again. Not a courtier attended his funeral, nor any member of the diplomatic body except the British ambassador.

It was quite in harmony with the generally capricious conduct of the emperor to break with England and Austria, and ally himself with France against them. This he did upon Napoleon displaying a tendency to re-establish in his own person monarchical power in that country; and Paul placed himself at the head of that maritime coalition of the northern powers against England which led Nelson to the battle of Copenhagen, and afterwards to Revel Roads. But his most notable project was a compact formed with Napoleon for the invasion of the Anglo-Indian empire, containing the

following details: 1. "A French army, 35,000 strong, with light artillery, under the command of Massena, shall be moved from France to Ulm, whence, with the consent of Austria, it shall descend the Danube to the Black Sea. 2. Arrived there, a Russian fleet will transport it to Taganrok; thence it shall move to Tzaritzin on the Volga, where it will find boats to convey it to Astrakhan. 3. There it will find a Russian army of 35,000 men, composed of 15,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 10,000 Cossacks, amply provided with artillery and the horses necessary for its conveyance. 4. The combined army shall be transported by the Caspian Sea from Astrakhan to Astrabad, where magazines of all sorts shall be established for its use. 5. The march from the frontiers of France to Astrabad will be made in eighty days; fifty more will be requisite to bring the army to the banks of the Indus, by the route of Herat, Felah, and Candahar." Paul afterwards agreed to increase the Cossacks to 50,000. The two potentates forgot to state how many of their troops they expected to be alive on reaching the Indian frontier.

The home government of Paul had by this time become perfectly intolerable. No gentleman could appear in the streets of his capital in top-boots without being in danger of going home in his stocking-soles, while ladies went to prison upon a diet of bread and water for not wearing their hair according to the

imperial pleasure. For the most frivolous cause, and frequently for no cause at all, officers were cashiered and nobles were sent to Siberia. A harmless epigram cost a man of letters his tongue; and persons suddenly disappeared from their homes and haunts without explanation of their fate, but who were believed to have been privately executed. Fear spread through every circle, and life itself became a misery. Amid the caprices of a delirious despotism no man had any confidence, on leaving his habitation, that he should see it again. In proportion as the emperor acted the part of the tyrant he became increasingly suspicious, till every one, even his own family, were objects of distrust. One day, after vehemently complaining of universal treachery, Alexander offered to test the fidelity of the garrison by giving a false alarm in the night; and received a written authority to make the experiment. At one o'clock, when Paul and almost all St. Petersburg were fast asleep, the drums beat and the tocsin sounded. Roused by the alarm, the citizens rushed from their dwellings to ascertain the cause, which no one knew; and the soldiers rapidly passed through the streets to assemble on the parade, while the attendants of the emperor awoke him. Paul, forgetful of the stratagem to which he was a party, rose in terror; and, thinking the dreaded hour of revolution had surely come, he ordered his horse, and fled from the capital towards Gatshina, followed by two servants. Scarcely

had he left the palace, when Alexander appeared to state, that the soldiers were on the parade awaiting the orders of the sovereign. Astonished at his having absconded in affright, he immediately rode after him. The son galloped hard, and the father galloped faster on hearing the sound of horses' heels behind. At last Alexander came up with Paul, and an explanation calmed the fears of the fugitive. The absurdities and violence of the emperor produced a general impression at court that he was subject to fits of mental derangement; and thousands beyond its precincts felt that he ought to be deprived of the government, without entertaining the question how it was to be effected. Napoleon declared at St. Helena that he thought "latterly, Paul was mad."

To effect a change, recourse was had to the extreme remedy of subjects under absolute governments — conspiracy and assassination — means of redress usually applied at Rome by the Prætorian guards, at Constantinople by the Janissaries, and at St. Petersburg by a confederation of influential persons about the court. The combination against Paul embraced only a few individuals, but they were all men of high station, chiefly military officers. None of them seem to have acted from feelings of personal resentment; for though each must have felt his position insecure every moment, they were rather the favourites than the victims of despotism, and some of them were high in the con-

fidence of the emperor. His removal from the headship of the state was deemed a political necessity; and equally so his murder, in order to give security to the subsequent government, and save themselves from the possibility of being visited with the vengeance of a dethroned but restored sovereign. Though assassination might not be formally named, there can be little doubt that the leaders had a private understanding with each other upon the subject. The conspirators consisted of Prince Plato Zubof, the last acknowledged favourite of the Empress Catherine; his two brothers Valerian and Nicholas, officers of artillery and cavalry; general Beningsen, afterwards conspicuous in the wars with France; and several other generals and colonels, all subordinate to Count Pahlen, when he was gained, the military governor of St. Petersburg. His office qualified him to direct the conspiracy by furnishing him with facilities for its execution. He was also remarkable for wariness and self-possession; and Paul had implicitly relied on his fidelity. Upon some vague rumours of the plot reaching the emperor, he sent for Pahlen, and directed him instantly to inquire into the circumstances. "Sire," replied he, with a perfectly unembarrassed air, "I know it all; and in order to assure myself of the guilty, I am myself a conspirator." Paul was tranquillised by the frank avowal, and commended the dexterous vigilance of the governor of his capital.

It was absolutely necessary for the conspirators to implicate the sons in the removal of their father, in order to escape the punishment of traitors under a new sovereign. Pahlen undertook this task. He experienced great difficulty in overcoming the scruples of the grand-dukes, though they were fully alive to the incapacity of their sire, and to the evils which his rule inflicted upon the country. Not a word was said to them of murder; and their consent to a dethronement was only gained by a double treachery. Pahlen worked upon the fears of the imperial family. He confidentially informed Alexander that he was certainly in danger of being arrested by his father; and then privately denounced the prince to Paul as one whom it might be necessary to arrest for entertaining suspicious designs. Having obtained an order to this effect, to be executed whenever expedient, he laid it before the grand-duke; and urged him to consent to the scheme of compulsory abdication, as the only way to save the empire from ruin. Shocked at the sight of the instrument, Alexander silently acquiesced in the deposition as a state necessity. The design several times narrowly escaped defeat. Paul having received further intelligence of a conspiracy existing, at last suspected the fidelity of Pahlen, and determined to supersede him. He despatched a courier to Araktcheief, formerly governor of St. Petersburg, who was at some distance from the capital, with a number of trusty troops, ordering him

immediately to march to his assistance, and resume his post. But Pahlen, ever on the alert, caused the messenger to be arrested, seized the despatch, and became aware of his danger. He now resolved, with his confederates, to act without delay; and the doom of the emperor was fixed for the night of March 23. 1801.

The capital, in the reign of Paul, had a winter imperial palace on the Neva, and a summer one on the Fontanka canal The emperor pulled down the latter, and thus rendered the name of the former unmeaning. But he erected upon its site, being afraid of his subjects, the castle-like Michaelof palace, a massive and gloomy structure of granite, surrounded with walls and ditches, and bristling with cannon, dedicated to the archangel Michael, whence the name. Owing to his anxiety to occupy this stronghold, it was reared with extraordinary rapidity. Five thousand men were employed upon it; and eighteen millions of roubles were expended. It had fine painted ceilings, large and labyrinth-like halls, and spacious vestibules and corridors paved with beautiful marbles. Over the front entrance, a passage from the Bible in the old Sclavonic language was inscribed in gold letters: "On thy house will the blessing of the Lord rest for evermore." Alas for human foresight! In a room on the second floor of this palace, in spite of walls, ditches, cannon, and granite, Paul perished by the violent hand, after having occupied it just forty

days; and it has never since been the residence of imperialism.

On the last day of his life, while riding through the streets, one of the poorer classes attempted to present a note to the emperor. But his horse being restive at the moment, it was taken by an attendant, and forgotten till its information came too late. The note contained a disclosure of the whole plot, and of the names of the conspirators. Another note of a similar tenor was handed to the sovereign in the evening while at supper; but deeming it of no importance, he put it in his pocket, intending to read it the next day. He supped at nine o'clock. Alexander was present, who knew that the deed of abdication had just been drawn up, designed to give him the empire during the night. The conspirators supped at General Talizin's. One of the party was the colonel of the Semenovski battalion of guards, then on duty at the palace. The time for the deed was well chosen; for as it was the Russian carnival, when the people abandon themselves to festivity, no notice would be taken of a number of men in the streets late at night.

Paul retired to rest very early, while Alexander sat up. Between eleven and twelve o'clock, about twenty of the conspirators proceeded to the palace, and gained admission by the statement, that the emperor had sent for them to hold a council of war. The sentry on duty observing many of them to be general officers in

full regimentals, believed the story, and allowed them to pass. They ascended the great staircase in profound silence; but on advancing to the royal apartment, a Cossack guard shouted "Treason," and was immediately cut down. No order or silence was henceforth observed. The party rushed pell-mell into the bed-room, but it was empty. Some cried out, "He has escaped us." Beningsen replied, "That he has not: no weakness;" and putting his hand on the bed-clothes, he observed that the emperor could not be far off, as they were quite warm. Paul was found crouching in a closet, having been alarmed by the shout of the Cossack. Dragged from his retreat, and required instantly to sign his abdication, he refused, and heaped reproaches and threats upon his assailants. "Sire," said Beningsen, "it is a matter of life and death; you must submit;" but he made a desperate resistance. What followed at that time of horror is differently stated; but the main fact is certain, that in a few minutes he was overpowered, and strangled on the floor. Some relations say, that as the scarf was placed around his neck, he exclaimed, "Gentlemen, for heaven's sake spare me! or leave me time to pray to God!" Others affirm that his last words were, "And you, too, my Constantine!" If this exclamation came from his lips, it is supposed that the unhappy father must have mistaken one of the assassins for his son, from similarity of dress, an error to which the suspicions artfully instilled into

his mind respecting the fidelity of his family contributed. But both Constantine and Alexander are quite clear of the guilt of parricide. Pahlen, the arch mover in this dreadful deed, was not present when it was perpetrated. He was then advancing towards the palace, at the head of a body of troops, ready to support Alexander, in case of success, and to appear as the deliverer of Paul in case of failure.

Deeply affecting scenes followed the consummation of the crime. Alexander, who was in a room below while it was perpetrated, gave way to frantic demonstrations of grief upon being informed that the life of his father had been taken, and at first refused a throne so fearfully vacated. But all parties insisted upon his receiving at once their allegiance. The painful duty of making the empress-mother acquainted with the event, was committed to the Countess Lieven. She had not been aroused by the disturbance; and upon being awoke, thought it was the death of her daughter, the princess palatine of Hungary, that had occurred. "No, madam," replied the countess, "your majesty must survive a greater misfortune; the emperor has just died in a fit of apoplexy." "No, no!" exclaimed the empress, "he has been assassinated!" Hastily dressing herself, she rushed towards the chamber of her husband, but was stopped by the lieutenant of a company of soldiers stationed in an intermediate saloon. The men crossed bayonets to prevent her passage, upon which

she struck the officer, and sunk fainting into an arm-chair. After recovering and surmounting the first shock, she insisted upon being declared the reigning empress, by virtue of her coronation; and was with great difficulty induced to take the oath of allegiance to her son. But with excessive joy it was taken the next day by all the public officers, and inhabitants of the capital; and throughout the empire the regicide of Paul was forgotten in the accession of Alexander. The castellated palace of the unfortunate emperor has since his murder been converted into a school of engineers.

CHAP. XX.

ALEXANDER I.—ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS.

PAINFUL POSITION OF ALEXANDER.—HIS CHARACTER AND MEASURES.—ANNEXATION OF GEORGIA.—THE GEORGIAN ROYAL FAMILY.—TRANS-CAUCASIA.—WAR WITH PERSIA.—ALEXANDER AT TILSIT.—CONQUEST OF FINLAND.—WAR WITH TURKEY.—RUPTURE WITH NAPOLEON.—THE FRENCH INVASION.—BURNING OF MOSCOW.—HORRORS OF THE RETREAT.—TRIUMPH OF ALEXANDER.—HIS DOMESTIC PLANS AND FAILURE.—MILITARY COLONIES.—CIRCASSIA.—INUNDATION AT ST. PETERSBURG.—LAST DAYS OF ALEXANDER.—ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS.—REVOLT OF 1825.

THE sovereigns of all the Russias in the present century have taken the reins of government under most trying circumstances. Alexander received them in the dead of night from the blood-stained hands of those who very nearly implicated him in the guilt of parricide; and his own participation in the project of dethronement, which ended so tragically, without his concurrence, rested upon his mind as a dark shadow to the end of life. Nicholas on rising to the throne, was greeted by the abortive attempt at revolution, which compelled him to make the squares and streets of his capital reverberate with the roar of cannon; and his ambition bequeathed to his successor, Alexander II.,

the legacy of an empire unable to show a sail upon the seas, with the armies of four European powers encamped upon its soil. But the position of the first of the name was most peculiar. It was remarked by a French lady, writing to Fouche, that at the ceremony of the emperor's inauguration, "he walked, preceded by the assassins of his grandfather, followed by those of his father, and surrounded by his own." Though the augury in the latter part of this epigrammatic sentence happily proved untrue, his life was threatened by conspirators towards the close of his reign; and the sad necessity was imposed upon him at the beginning of retaining the murderers of a parent about his person and investing them with the chief offices of state. Pahlen and Zubof were indeed soon got rid of, but their associates remained, and Beningsen was long conspicuous at the head of armies. The dismissal of the former was owing to a collision with the empress-mother. That unhappy lady made an unwise and somewhat ostentatious display of personal feeling on the occasion of her widowhood. She caused a picture to be painted representing her husband in his last agony, imploring the vengeance of Heaven upon his destroyers; and ordered it to be publicly exposed in connection with a charitable foundation under her care. The exhibition attracted crowds, and was deemed politically dangerous by Pahlen, who requested his master to intercede for its removal. "My son," said

the dowager, in reply, "you must choose between Pahlen and me." Alexander submitted to his mother; and ordered the minister to retire privately from the capital.

The young emperor, twenty-three years of age at the time of his accession, March 24. 1801, inherited from his mother a gentle and affectionate disposition, with more susceptibility of friendship than is always wise or convenient for monarchs to indulge. His education had been entrusted by his grandmother to a freethinking French tutor. Yet, while a true republican, La Harpe was a man of noble character and many virtues; and constantly endeavoured to inspire the mind of his illustrious pupil with humane sentiments and liberal ideas. On assuming the sceptre, Alexander remembered some of the best lessons of his preceptor; and after having made peace with England, and ratified friendly relations with France, he applied himself with an enlightened spirit to domestic reforms. He gave large concessions to the press; reduced the expenditure of the court, and the taxes of the people; abolished torture as a means of procuring evidence; declared himself against the practice of making grants of peasants, a custom common with former autocrats, and forbade the journals to announce the sale of human beings. He encouraged the nobles to sell to their serfs, not only personal freedom, but portions of land, to be held as the *bonâ fide* property of the purchaser;

founded new universities and numerous schools; promoted commerce and extended navigation; and by refined tastes, liberal views, and a cultivated mind he placed himself in a decidedly hostile attitude to old Muscovite barbarism. In the early part of his reign, 1803, two ships of the empire under Krusenstein touched at Falmouth on a southern voyage; and under a salute of eleven guns they crossed the equator, when the crews drank the health of the emperor, in whose glorious reign the Russian flag first waved in the southern hemisphere.

But Alexander never for a moment lost sight of the hereditary policy of his dynasty — the conquest and annexation of neighbouring countries; and in the pursuance of this object he showed himself imbued with true Russian duplicity, disclaiming ambitious views while thoroughly inflamed by them, assuming the mask of religion to promote despotism, and professing disinterestedness while intent upon a selfish purpose. Georgia was his first spoil.

The sovereign of that unfortunate country, Heraclius, died at a far advanced age in 1798, and was succeeded by his son Goorgheen Khân, or, as he is styled in some documents, George XI. This prince, an imbecile man, being attacked by the Lesghians and other hostile neighbours, applied to Russia for succour; and it was granted at the price of independence, for the emperor Paul annexed the territory to his dominions.

The prince died immediately after surrendering the liberties of his country, crushed in spirit, leaving a queen, Maria, with seven children; and the emperor was strangled soon after the annexation was declared. But Alexander confirmed the ukase of his father, and carried it into effect, incorporating Georgia as a province in his empire, September 12. 1801. "Not," said he, in a manifesto addressed to his new subjects, "to increase our forces, not through selfish views, not to enlarge an empire whose boundaries already extend so far, do we take on ourselves the burden of the throne of Georgia. The feeling of our dignity, honour, and humanity have alone imposed on us the sacred duty of listening to your cries for help; of averting from your heads the misfortunes which oppress you; and of introducing a powerful government in Georgia, which is capable of exercising justice and impartiality, of protecting the life and property of each, and of covering all with the ægis of the law." Thus the sceptre of the czars was stretched across the Caucasus to Tiflis, about 1751 miles from St. Petersburg; and Zizianof, a Georgian by birth, but an officer in the Russian service, was constituted the first governor-general of the acquired district. It is remarkable that Turkey was so little alive to the dangerous contiguity of Russia to the Asiatic portion of her empire, that she actually promoted it, by granting the free navigation of the Phasis to the northern power. In consequence of this con-

cession, Russia could advance troops to Tiflis by the Black Sea, and thereby avoid both the difficult direct passage of the Caucasus, and the long route by the Caspian shore.

The annexation of Georgia was not effected without a tragedy. After the death of her husband, Queen Maria, who had protested against the cession of her country, continued to reside at Tiflis, with her family; but the harsh demeanour of the Russian authorities induced her to plan an escape to the independent Caucasian mountaineers. This project being betrayed, Zizianof was directed to send the entire royal family to St. Petersburg. Accordingly, the governor-general deputed Colonel Lazareff to fulfil the mission; and in pursuance of it, at a very early hour, he entered the apartments of the queen. She was awake, and seated, after the Turkish fashion, on her divan; but her children were still slumbering around her. Lazareff approached her disrespectfully, and after rough conversation, he attempted to seize her by the leg. The indignant woman instantly drew a dagger, and stabbed him with such determination, that the weapon came out at his back. He instantly expired; but his soldiers rushed in, struck the queen with their sabres, and beat her with their muskets, till she was insensible. A few months afterwards, she was on the banks of the Neva, with her sons and daughters, occupying the Taurida Palace, an object of curiosity to the people.

Mr. James saw the deprived royal family on the occasion of an annual festival at the Winter Palace. "Independent of the interest," says he, "attached to their situation, it was impossible not to notice them from their singularity of air and mien. The princes were handsome men, but the princesses, though not young, displayed features of unparalleled beauty. They were dressed with small coifs upon their heads, from which a long white veil, open in front, descended to their feet, lending by its novel fashion a new grace to the elegance of their persons."

A local Georgian tradition most unaccountably refers the beauty of the females in part to an English origin. Allah, says a legend at Gori, wished to stock his celestial harem with the fairest daughters of earth. He, therefore, commissioned an Imam, who was a great connoisseur in female beauty, to cull for him forty of the loveliest women he could find. The Imam journeyed into Frankistan, into the country of the Ingliz, whence he carried off the king's daughter. The English monarch pursued him, but Allah, who protected his servant, threw dust in the eyes of the pursuer, and thus checked him. From England the Imam proceeded to Germany, where he selected many lovely maidens; but when he reached Gori, he fell in love with one of the beauties he had chosen for the celestial harem, and remained there with the whole bevy. Allah punished the treachery of the Imam by

death, but the beautiful maidens all remained in Gori, and became the mothers of a splendid race of mortals.

The ancient sovereigns of Georgia lie buried in the Cathedral of Msket, the place of their coronation. Over the grave of the last, Alexander ordered the Marquis Paulucci, governor-general, to erect a monument with an inscription to the effect, that he ceded his states to Russia in 1801; and thus, with political finesse, the mask of reverence for the dead was made a memorial to the living of their legal subjection. He also restored to the people the cross of their patroness, St. Nino. According to ecclesiastical tradition, this female missionary came into the country, in the fourth century, to diffuse the true faith, bearing a cross made of the vine bound with her hair. Holding this symbol in her hand, she preached the doctrine of the evangelists. The cross was afterwards carefully preserved by the kings, who, when absent, deposited it in the Cathedral of Msket, and in times of invasion retired with it to the mountains. The venerated relic found its way to Moscow at an early stage of the intercourse between Russia and Georgia, perhaps for safe custody while the country was in a distracted state. Heraclius often, though without success, solicited its return. But upon the annexation, the emperor sent it back as a cheap benefaction to his new subjects, and a prized offering to them. In 1808 the neighbouring provinces of Imeritia and Mingrelia were occupied by his troops,

and subsequently incorporated with the empire. To facilitate communication with these acquisitions the military road across the mountains was constructed, through the pass known to the ancients as the *Portæ Caucasiæ*. It ascends the tremendous defiles of the Upper Terek, skirts the majestic Kasbek, and descends into the valley of the Aragas. At the summit of the pass, on the "Mountain of the Cross," a stone monument commemorates the completion of the road in the year 1809. It was first traversed by General Todleben with a convoy of ammunition and stores. Enormous losses in men and money have been entailed upon the empire by its Trans-Caucasian extension; but the number slain in guerilla warfare with the mountaineers, though a formidable item in itself, is insignificant compared with the mortality occasioned by the intermittent fevers of the climate. Georgia has hence been called the cemetery of the Russian army.

The southerly advance of the frontier provoked a long and desultory war with Persia. Its principal incidents were the defeat of the Persians by Zizianof in 1804, the conquest of the province of Shirwan by the same commander in 1806, and his treacherous assassination in the same year while receiving the keys of Fort Baku. He lies buried in the Cathedral of Tiflis, beneath a monument erected to his memory by the Marquis Paulucci. Peace was not re-established between the two countries till the year 1813, when the

foolish treaty of Gulistan was concluded under the auspices of England. By its terms Russia was permitted to hold for a limited time a province on the north bank of the Araxes, and another to the south of its embouchure in the Caspian, as a guarantee for a future treaty. It was said at the time that "both the Persians and the English were gulled;" and, having been once occupied, the provinces were firmly held.

Governed by transient sentiments rather than by firm principles, ambitious of distinction, and susceptible to flattery, Alexander remarkably exemplified the infirmities of his nature in his conduct towards Napoleon, and richly merited the severe censure which the latter pronounced, when he compared him to a Greek of the Lower Empire. Upon the death of the Duc d'Enghien he regarded the French emperor with much of the personal resentment due to a murderer, and joined the coalition against him. But after the disastrous campaigns of Austerlitz, Eylau, and Friedland, followed by the oft-told tale of Tilsit, where the two monarchs met, he passed to the extreme of admiration, and bound himself for nearly five years to the chariot wheels of the conqueror, betraying his allies and making them a spoil. Amid the general intoxication occasioned by a meeting of crowned heads in gorgeous pavilions and at brilliant festivities, there was at least one of his subjects who preserved discretion. This was Platof, the celebrated Hetman of the Don Cossacks, upon whom the

disposer of thrones was willing to confer the order of the Legion of Honour. "As he likes," said he, in his own peculiar style; "it is his will; but if he actually send me his order as a recompense, I will not receive it, and so I will inform my liege sovereign. Why should he reward me? I certainly never served him. I serve my natural sovereign in faith and truth. But for him I will not sacrifice one drop of blood; not a moment of time; and nobody shall oblige me to do so: in testimony whereof I do penance, and bow before Almighty God." At a grand review some of the French officers observed Platof intently watching Napoleon. "I am not looking," he remarked, "at your emperor; in him there is nothing extraordinary; he is as other people; I am looking at his horse, and I wish to know its race."

At Tilsit, Alexander suffered himself to be bribed to treachery by the flatteries of Napoleon and the prospect of pillage. By a scheme as perfidious as it was daring, the two autocrats partitioned Europe between them; and on condition of supporting the Western dictator in his measures, the Northern power was allowed expansion by the ruin of Scandinavia and the Ottoman empire, though Constantinople was expressly exempted from appropriation. The czar pleaded hard to gain the city of the sultan, and "the keys of his own house," as he called the Dardanelles. But "Constantinople!" muttered Napoleon abstractedly, "Constantinople! never! It is the empire of the

world!" The only excuse for Alexander is that he was under the spell of an enchanter, whose ascendency over others was little else than magical. At Erfurt, where Talma acted before another congress of sovereigns,—princes on benches, kings on common chairs, and the two autocrats enthroned in front,—at the line,

"L'amitié d'un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux,"

Alexander rose to exchange greetings with his new confederate, exclaiming "Never did I feel it more," while the house resounded with kingly and princely thunders of applause.

The privileged aggressor promptly commenced the work of aggression. Having in vain summoned Sweden to adopt the Napoleonic system by closing her ports to the English ships and trade, a Russian army marched into Finland before any specific declaration of war had been made. The invasion commenced in February 1808, while deep snow lay upon the ground, and the lakes and streams were solid plains of ice, capable of bearing troops and the heaviest artillery. Upon crossing the frontier river, Count Buxhövden, the commander, issued a manifesto to the inhabitants, which has had many a counterpart in the ambitious wars of his country: "Good neighbours,—It is with the greatest regret that my most gracious master, the Emperor of All the Russias, sees himself forced to send into your country the troops under my orders. But

his majesty the King of Sweden, while withdrawing more and more from the happy alliance between the two greatest empires in the world (Russia and France), draws closer his connections with the common enemy (Great Britain), whose oppressive system and unparalleled conduct towards the most intimate allies of Russia, and of Sweden herself, cannot be coolly endured by his imperial majesty. These motives, as well as the regard which he owes to the safety of his own states, oblige him to place your country *under his protection*, and to take possession of it in order to procure by these means a *sufficient guarantee* in case his Swedish majesty should persevere in the resolution not to accept the equitable conditions of peace that have been proposed to him." Upon hearing of this unprincipled invasion of his dominions, Gustavus IV. ordered the Russian ambassador at Stockholm to be arrested; an impolitic proceeding, as it afforded a pretext for further aggression: and from that moment Alexander declared that he regarded that part of Finland occupied by his armies as a conquered province, united for ever with his empire.

Various circumstances combined to facilitate the triumph of Russia over Sweden, besides the inequality of the two powers. Indulging a false security, the Swedish government was wholly unprepared to defend Finland; the troops were in the cantonments they occupied in time of peace when the enemy crossed the

frontier; and the country was largely overrun before an army and fleet were equipped. Gustavus was also an obstinate and fool-hardy man, if not a lunatic. He quarrelled with his English allies, and was at variance with his own subjects, who at last dethroned him. Klingsporr, his commander-in-chief, adopted a timid and dispiriting policy; and Cronstedt, the governor of Sveaborg, suffered himself to be either decoyed through weakness of character, or corrupted by gold, into delivering up that important fortress.

"Now, hurrah! for brave old Klercker, endless honour is his due;
Twenty years of toil had tried him, as a man and soldier too;
His white head I well remember, as amid the ranks he rode,
Mustering his brave boys with glances where a father's fondness glowed.

"Then came Klingsporr, the field-marshal, with his bearing proud and high,
With his mean and coward spirit, and his single lowering eye;
Then came Klingsporr—seized the office due unto his high estate,
And gave orders prompt as Klercker's; but the order was—Retreat!"

Still the country was not conquered without a severe struggle and much bloodshed. The most desperate battle, fought at Oravais, on the shore of the Gulf of Bothnia, lasted fourteen consecutive hours, and was only closed by both sides consuming all their cartridges. The Swedes retreated, but in good order, and the Russians were too much exhausted to pursue. In the course of the war in 1809, General Knorring marched a corps

of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, 15,000 strong, over the ice from Abo to the Aland islands, and took possession of the archipelago—an incident which many of the older inhabitants well remember. At the same time Barclay de Tolly performed the daring enterprise of leading his army over the Gulf of Bothnia into Sweden, crossing at the North Quarken, where the shores are about sixty miles apart. He made the passage in three days, after a journey resembling in its details the narratives of polar explorers. The troops bivouacked at night. Their guides often lost the way amid frightful masses of ice and snow which storms had confusedly heaped together. Stakes planted as marks by a reconnoitring party sent beforehand could not be found, having been overthrown by the winds. The sledges were continually stopped by wide chasms, which had to be crossed like rivers, or avoided by long detours. Fortunately, though the weather was intensely cold, the air was calm, for had a snow-storm occurred, the army must have inevitably perished. The hazardous expedition was useless; for scarcely had the troops reached the Swedish side, when they had to retrace their steps, a truce having been concluded.

Under a new sovereign, Charles XIII., Sweden consented to the terms of Russia, and signed away Finland, with the Aland Archipelago, September 17th 1809, by the Peace of Fredericksham. In the following year Alexander entered the town of Borgå,

with a brilliant suite, and received the homage of his new subjects, by their representatives. At the time of the annexation, Finland had a constitution similar to that of Sweden. The four orders of the land, nobility, clergy, burghers, and peasantry, sent representatives to the Assembly of Estates, without whose consent no new taxes could be imposed or troops levied. The emperor promised to respect the constitution, and issued a ukase to this effect. Nicholas did the same at his accession. But though never formally abrogated, and therefore nominally existing, no representative body has ever been allowed to meet; and all public affairs are under the direction of a governor-general, an imperial senate, and a ministerial secretary of state at the capital. The cession of Finland was an immense loss to Sweden, as it was the granary of Stockholm, while a slenderly peopled kingdom was deprived of nearly a million of souls. The acquisition was of vast importance to Russia, as it removed a second-rate power from inconvenient neighbourhood, for the dominion of the Swedish crown previously extended to within forty miles of St. Petersburg; and in the inhabitants of the coasts, a race of hardy and expert seamen was placed at the disposal of the empire.

In the contemplated spoliation of the Ottoman empire, Alexander was disappointed at the moment that his armies had opened the way to success. Favoured by insurrections which so paralysed the

power of the sultan that only a touch from without seemed necessary to effect its entire overthrow, the Russian troops had mastered the entire right bank of the Danube in the campaign of 1810, when the emperor, after a process of gradual cooling towards the "great man," his pet friend at Tilsit and Erfurt, found himself on the eve of an encounter with him as an open enemy. Both were dissemblers, privately striving to overreach each other while publicly exchanging ostentatious civilities; and both vented complaints and recrimination upon the discovery of their mutual intrigues. The appearance of cordiality was for some time preserved; and malachite vases travelled from St. Petersburg to Paris, with Sèvres porcelain in the reverse direction, while the mood of the imperial confederates was angry and threatening. Alexander in committing himself to the continental system of Napoleon, and excluding English goods from his dominions, soon found that he had made a capital mistake. The income of his nobles depended upon the sale of the gross produce of their estates; England was the best customer; and in consequence of the stoppage of trade immense quantities of grain, hemp, flax, and tallow accumulated at Riga and Archangel, unable to reach a foreign market. The emperor was therefore compelled to relax the prohibitory system by the loud murmurs of magnates and merchants, at the hazard of a decided breach with the would-be

master of the Continent. Upon hostilities becoming imminent, he was necessarily anxious to conclude peace with Turkey, in order to draw off his forces in that direction; and when Sultan Mahmoud refused to sign a disadvantageous treaty, Russian gold was employed to corrupt his ministers and disband his army. Thus compelled to yield, he assented to the peace of Bucharest, May 28th, 1812, which advanced the frontier of the czar from the Dniester to the Pruth, and surrendered to him the left bank of the mouth of the Danube.

At this period, Napoleon, at the head of the armies of France, Austria, Prussia, and the Rhenish Confederation, with a miscellaneous collection of Poles, Italians, Spaniards, and Portuguese, — a total of 500,000 men, — was advancing towards the Niemen, intent upon chastising the recusancy of Alexander, within the limits of his empire. He crossed the frontier river, with the first division of his vast force, 220,000 strong, June the 24th, a season too far advanced for a successful invasion in a single campaign. The Russian generals, whose united armies did not exceed 300,000 men, adopted the wise policy of retiring before the invaders, harassing them by incessant skirmishes, breaking up the roads to retard advance, and desolating the country to cut off supplies; while Napoleon had expected either the offer of decisive battle, or proposals of peace as the result of intimida-

tion. He left Wilna, where twenty days were foolishly lost, July the 16th; entered Vitepsk July the 28th; and arrived at Smolensko in the middle of August, 380 miles from Moscow. The policy of retreat before the enemy, drawing him into the interior, and gradually wasting his army, though the most effectual course that could have been adopted to overthrow him in the end, was vehemently denounced by many of the Russian officers, nobles, and courtiers, as disgraceful to the empire; and Barclay de Tolly, a foreigner, the commander-in-chief, was superseded by Kutasof, a native, recently returned from the Turkish frontier. This general, resolving not to surrender Moscow without a blow, fought and lost the battle of Borodino, September the 7th, — a tremendous conflict, from which the victors suffered more than the vanquished, as it nearly exhausted their ammunition, while far from supplies. It was now decided to abandon the ancient capital of the czars, the holy city of the empire, to the astonishment and distress of its inhabitants, for the subjects of despotic governments only learn the real state of affairs when it can no longer be concealed. On Sunday the 13th, 300,000 people were suddenly aroused from a sense of security, by a peremptory order immediately to leave their homes, while the army of defence filed through the midst of them in full retreat. The officers of the government and the police quitted the city the following morning; the prisons

were thrown open; and none were left but the few who were unable to fly and those who remained to execute the secret orders of the government. Towards evening the advanced guard of the French arrived under Murat; and before night Napoleon was in the Kremlin.

The capital, with its churches and palaces, of grotesque architecture, rising above an immense number of inferior dwellings, must have presented a solemn and awful spectacle on the entrance of the enemy. Not a Muscovite was to be seen; not a chimney smoked; and not a sound was heard. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!" might have been truly ejaculated with reference to it. But scarcely had the French established themselves in quarters, when smoke and flames were observed issuing from houses closely shut up in different districts. By Tuesday evening, the 15th, the fires had assumed a menacing aspect distracting the efforts made to quench them by their number, while a high wind rapidly connected them with each other, and wrapped Moscow in one vast sheet of flame. The conflagration raged till Saturday, when the wind fell, the smoke gradually cleared off, and revealed the extent of the desolation. It is supposed that 7000 principal edifices, and 14,000 structures, making a grand total of 21,000 buildings, were consumed. Rostopshin, the governor of the city, arranged for its destruction by placing combustible materials in a certain number of houses, to be ignited

on the entrance of the French by men secreted for the purpose. Upon joining the army in its retreat, he was observed to bring along with him a number of carriages which were the fire-engines of Moscow. When asked why he had brought such things, he replied, that "he had good reasons for doing so. Nevertheless," he added, "as regards myself, I have only brought the horse I ride and the clothes I wear." Great mystery has been affected with reference to the sacrifice of the capital. At the time it was attributed by the Russian government to the French, in order to exasperate the people against them; and this is still the popular impression in the empire. Buturlin, an aide-de-camp of Alexander, who wrote under his eye, expressly referred the deed to Rostopshin. The latter, after a silence of some years, boldly disavowed all complicity in the affair, in "La Vérité sur l'Incendie de Moscow," a pamphlet published at Paris in 1822. But circumstantial evidence fully justifies the conclusion that Rostopshin was the author of the conflagration; that he acted with the full concurrence of the cabinet of St. Petersburg, though not expressed in written instructions; and that both parties shirked responsibility, as the measure was not morally justifiable, and would be deemed a disgraceful crime within the empire, however extolled as a glorious effort of patriotism without.

In expectation of proposals of peace, Napoleon clung

to the ruins around him. It was the policy of the Russians to protract his stay, by feeding him with false hopes, till the winter arrived; and he remained a full month in his position. Upon finding retreat inevitable, he quitted Moscow before daylight, October 19th, to retire along the road by which he had penetrated the country — a route leading through an exhausted territory, marked by the ashes of towns and the pestilential corpses of the slain, while the period was too late to escape the clutch of the ice-king. The horrors of the retreat are patent upon the page of general history. "I could not prevent it freezing: the winter set in before its usual time." Such were the words of Napoleon, addressed to the Aboé de Pradt, in the Hotel d'Angleterre at Warsaw. The first part of the remark was true enough. He might overrun a continent, but nature was not to be overpowered. Freeze it would, spite of the grand army and the bulletins of its master. Freeze it did, with relentless and deadly intensity; and that the frost was not anticipated by an earlier retirement is one of the most striking examples recorded in history of success producing extremity of rashness and pride leading to destruction. The latter part of the remark contains truth and error. In Russia, the winter of 1812, so far from being a premature season, was behind its ordinary time, though it did set in earlier than usual in its full inclemency. Through the first weeks of October the weather con-

tinued fine at Moscow. The sun of autumn shone brightly through a remarkably transparent atmosphere; and the climate was compared to that of closing September at Fontainebleau. Snow fell on the 13th, but only as a passing shower. The signals of approaching rigour common at the period to the latitude — a murky sky at intervals with sleet storms, biting winds, and sharp frosts — were not given. This circumstance was not more astonishing than distressing to the Russians; and in a time of great excitement, it was not unnatural to found upon it the apprehension of supernatural power being against them. But it effectually served their cause in the sequel, by lulling the invader into a deceitful security, preparatory to a more total ruin. It lured him to prolong his stay till the northern blasts were heard blowing in the distance, and were so close upon his heels, that escape by flight was impossible from the overwhelming hurricane of snow, and the arctic cold. The laggard winter came at last, and made up for coming late by an onset with true Siberian attributes, causing the fearful tragedies of the French retreat, which exhibits the hand of Providence avenging a career of boundless aggression, and recalled to the general mind of Europe the words of the Psalm, *Efflavit Jehovah, et dissipantur* — "Jehovah blew, and they were scattered."

Every circumstance that could inflict misery and destruction co-operated to annihilate the grand army;

want of food, clothing, shelter, and fuel, while exposed to a cold of sometimes 27° below zero; roads choked up with snow; a night of sixteen hours without protection from the biting north wind; armies around ready to attack where they could do it to advantage; and clouds of Cossacks ever on the alert to cut off all who from weakness or other causes were obliged to separate from the main body. The French bore up wonderfully under accumulated misfortunes; and even repulsed the enemy in most of the serious engagements. But the stoutest frames and hearts quailed at last. Thousands of ill-fed horses perished in a single night, till the greater part of the cavalry was dismounted; men were frozen to death by the night-fires; booty and artillery were abandoned; arms were thrown away by the soldiers as encumbrances, or from inability to carry them; all fraternity was destroyed by intense suffering; and the retreat became eventually a reckless individual struggle for life. Napoleon entered Smolensko November 9th, and made the passage of the Beresina on the 24th, with a dreadful loss, and in the midst of scenes of misery which have rarely been equalled. On December 5, placing himself in a sledge, he hurried away in advance of his troops; and passed with extreme rapidity through Germany to Paris, where a bulletin announced that "His Imperial Majesty never enjoyed better health." It is scarcely to the credit of their generalship, that his opponents did not capture him

within the empire, and send the great aggressor to end his days an exile in Siberia. Of those who entered Moscow in his train, about twenty thousand returned, and of the half million of men who crossed the frontier only eighty thousand regained it.

Ney was the hero of the retreat on the side of the French, and Platoff on that of the Russians. The latter, at the head of his Cossacks, made their name one of terror to the fugitives by incessant harassment. Jukovskii, who apostrophised the most renowned heroes in the autocratic imperial army, in his "Minstrel in the Russian Camp," thus refers to this celebrated chieftain: —

"And thou Platoff! thou stout of fight,
Thou Ataman, the Lion!
Thy busy lance, thy sling of might,
Scathe, scatter all they fly on.
A wild wolf broken from his lair,
An eagle on stretch'd pinion;
Death whispering in the foeman's ear
Throughout thy wide dominion.
Amidst the wood his torches fly —
How spreads the conflagration!
Bridges oppose — in dust they lie;
Towns — all in desolation."

The total amount of the destruction of human life occasioned by this invasion it is impossible to calculate; and it is equally in vain to endeavour to form any adequate conception of the intensity and extent of the suffering to which it gave rise. The disasters of the French were open to universal observation, while

Russia concealed as much as possible her wounds. During the struggle the devotion of all classes of the people to the sovereign, the fidelity of the serfs to their country in the presence of a foreign foe, however oppressed by their lords, and the influence of the priests, were remarkably illustrated. Alexander, too, from the moment that the soil of his empire was trod by the foe, rose superior to that infirmity of will which strongly marked his character, and steadily adhered to a definite course. He never faltered in the plan of beguiling his adversary to make a wreck of his army by exposing it to the severities of a northern winter; and then summoning enthralled Europe to assert its independence and join him in a grand attack upon the dictator.

The campaigns conducted for this object belong rather to the history of Europe than to that of Russia. They brought Alexander to Paris, on the 31st of March, 1814, to dictate the abdication of Napoleon, little more than eighteen months after the latter had entered Moscow. This was the most brilliant epoch in the reign of the czar, who behaved with moderation in the hour of victory, and graced his triumph by the strictest courtesy. He paid a hasty visit to London in June, where public curiosity was strongly excited by the Cossacks, mounted on their small white horses, with their long spears grounded, keeping guard at the door of Lawrence, the painter, while he took the portrait of their hetman Platoff. In honour of their sovereign, the senate at St. Petersburg decreed to him a kind of

political canonisation, and sent a deputation of three members, requesting him to accept the title of "Blessed," which had been formally voted. Alexander replied with truth: "I have always endeavoured to set the nation an example of simplicity and moderation; I could not accept the title you offer me without departing from my principles." It was next proposed to erect a commemorative monument. "It is for posterity," said he, "to honour my memory in that way, if it deems me worthy of it." Russia took no part in the campaign consequent upon the escape of Napoleon from Elba, though her armies were advancing by forced marches to the scene of action, when the victory of Waterloo terminated the reign of the Hundred Days.

With the best intentions for the benefit of his people Alexander returned to his vast dominions from Western Europe. He proposed to superintend in person the executive government, cleanse the Augean stable of official administration, and gradually introduce free institutions. He conceded a constitution to the Poles, maintained full religious liberty throughout the empire, and so warmly encouraged the English Bible Society, that during his reign 448,109 copies of the Scriptures were circulated in forty-one of the dialects spoken by his subjects. But, notwithstanding this liberalism, the czar was politically a despot, though one of the most humane that ever lived. He suffered the Polish constitution to be violated by his representatives in its

most essential provisions; and, upon complaint being made, suspended the liberty of the press, dissolved the national army, and reduced the representation to a mockery, while the principles of the Holy Alliance, of which he was the author, made him the friend of abominable despotisms wherever they existed.

In attempting to conduct and reform affairs of administration Alexander failed from his own deficiency in firmness and energy, with the want of suitable instruments, and the real physical difficulties to be encountered. The immense distances necessary to be travelled formed an insurmountable obstacle. Peter I. made the journey in winter between Moscow and St. Petersburg, 728 versts, or nearly 486 miles, in forty-six hours. This was considered a feat. Alexander, more than once, in an open sledge, in severe weather, passed between the capitals in forty-two hours. But from eight to twelve days of rapid travelling were required to reach Warsaw, Odessa, or Astrachan. The treachery of officers constituted the grand difficulty; they were perpetually deceiving their master as to the real state of things, in order to conceal their own peculations. It is related that, upon visiting one of the military colonies, he resolved to inspect every house, to satisfy himself respecting the condition of the establishment. On every table he found a dinner prepared, one of the principal articles of which was a young roast pig. At last Prince Volkhonski, suspecting some trick, slyly

cut off the tail of the pig and put it in his pocket. On entering the next house the pig was presented, but there was no tail. "I think," said the prince, "we have here an old friend." Upon his meaning being demanded, he took the tail from his pocket and fitted it to the place from which it had been abstracted. Disheartened and disgusted by innumerable frauds of this kind, Alexander abandoned the helm in despair to his minister Araktcheief, and the empire returned to its old routine.

The military colonies, which alarmed some of the neighbouring states, were organised by Araktcheief, and established in the year 1819. They consist of villages built according to a fixed plan, and governed by a military constitution, but inhabited by peasants of the crown, upon whom the soldiers are quartered. Each peasant above fifty years of age is considered a head or master colonist, and has a grant of forty acres of land, on condition of supporting a soldier and his family, who are domiciled with him. This inmate, when not occupied with military duty, assists in the labours of the field, and takes the name of agricultural soldier or military peasant. There is, besides, a reserve-man for each agricultural soldier, who, like him, engages in military and farm duty, and immediately takes his place when he dies or has completed his twenty-five years of service. These colonies were designed to relieve the state in maintaining the army, by com-

pelling the soldier to contribute to his own subsistence; to furnish him also with a home for his wife and children when summoned to leave them by the exigencies of war; and also to form an army of reserve ready for action whenever needed. They were established chiefly in the direction of Poland, Austria, and Turkey, where immense tracts of cultivable soil lay waste, and near to probable scenes of hostilities. The colonies are rigorously separated from the provinces in which they are situated, and cannot be entered without a special passport; while so searching is their government, that it is said when even a hen lays an egg it is necessary to make an entry of the fact in a register. They have not answered expectation in relieving the finances of the state, but been a burden, while an intolerable oppression to the peasants, reminding them of slavery by their own firesides. Alexander, when he affixed the three important words to the ukase which constituted the institutions, "*Buit po semel*—Be it so," little conceived the misery he was inflicting upon a class whose condition he was always anxious to improve. Dr. Lee states that, when a priest was speaking to some of these peasants of the punishments of hell, they answered, they dreaded them not, because a worse hell than that in which they were doomed to pass their lives here could not possibly exist.

During the last half of the reign the command in the Caucasus was held by Yermoloff, one of the most

distinguished of the Russian generals, still living at Moscow, who was succeeded by Paskievitch. Hostilities with the mountain tribes were not then carried on to the extent, or with the system, which they subsequently acquired; yet there were wild forays on the part of the highlanders, and bloody encounters with their aggressive neighbours. In the year 1818 Yermoloff encroached upon the territory of the Tchetchenzes, better known by the name of Circassians; upon which they seized by stratagem the Russian fort Amir, on the line of the Terek, and cut down the garrison. The two generals Grekoff and Lissanevitch advanced to dislodge them from the fortress; but the besieged, after defending themselves to the last extremity, escaped by cutting their way through the beleaguring troops sabre in hand. It was now considered advisable to accommodate differences by negotiation with the indomitable race; and they were invited to send a single representative to a council of war. The proposition was accepted; and a dauntless Tchetche appeared before the Russian generals. They spoke of treason and perjury; the indignant chief retorted the accusation; and denounced in no measured terms the conduct of the Russians. "Silence, traitor!" said Grekoff, "or I will have you hanged!" "Do you honour the law of hospitality in this manner," cried the furious Tchetche; and he rushed on the general to stab him with his kindjal. Sabres rattled, pistols

were fired, and soldiers rushed into the room. But general Lissanevitch, a colonel, and two other officers fell beneath the dagger of the enraged chief before he was cut down. Yermoloff revenged the death of his subordinates by destroying the aouls, or villages, of the mountaineers; and acquired the name of the "Russian devil," which has been liberally and not undeservedly bestowed on commanders in the Caucasus.

Melancholy oppressed the mind of Alexander in his later years, and was plainly depicted on his countenance. It arose from reflection upon his complicity in his father's downfal, domestic sorrow, a public misfortune, and popular dissatisfaction, embittered at last by the knowledge of an undeveloped conspiracy against his person and government. Very early in life, when only sixteen years of age, he had been wedded by his grandmother, Catherine, to an estimable princess, Maria of Baden, who took the name of Elizabeth upon being united to him. But, brought up in a depraved court, he contracted habits at variance with domestic fidelity, and for many years allowed his affections to be divided by one of his own subjects. She proved at last faithless; and, amid bitter remembrances, one child alone remained to console him, of whom he was the father. This was Sophia Narishkin, a beautiful and engaging girl, to whom he was strongly attached, having no children surviving by his wife. In her eighteenth year she was affianced to a young officer, with the full

approbation of the emperor. The marriage-day was nigh, when one morning he was reviewing a detachment of his guards in the great square of the capital an aide-de-camp rode up, and requested to speak with him in private. His daughter, who had been ill, was dead. "I receive the punishment of my sins," he was heard to say as he struck his hand upon his forehead, and rode dejectedly off the ground. The stroke drove him to the side of the empress, whom he ever afterwards strove to compensate for past neglect.

While Moscow was ravaged by fire in the reign of Alexander, it was his lot to witness St. Petersburg desolated by an inundation. Continued westerly gales drive up the waters of the Gulf of Finland into the Neva; and the site of the capital being very slightly elevated above the ordinary level of the river, the swollen stream spreads itself over the quays and streets of the city. Dreadful floods occurred in 1728, 1729, 1735, 1740, 1742, and 1777; but the most terrible was caused by autumnal equinoctial gales from the south-west on the 19th of November, 1824. The preceding night was stormy; at daylight the wind blew with hurricane violence; at eight o'clock the alarm guns began to be fired from the Admiralty, firing more briskly as the river rose; and at noon, for three hours, the whole site of St. Petersburg was under water. The inundation raged through the streets with tremendous fury; and carried off the wooden houses

entire in the lowest quarters, with the occupiers clinging to the roofs. The emperor stood on the balcony of the Winter Palace, surrounded by the imperial family, watching the progress of an invincible enemy, giving the necessary orders, and in some alarm for the safety of the princely abodes around him. Several thousands of persons were drowned, according to the official return, but the number was vastly underrated; while property was destroyed or damaged which millions of roubles would not cover. To a similar disaster the city is constantly exposed.

The czar never recovered from the shock of this calamity. It was rendered the more distressing by the superstitious multitude regarding it as the judgment of God upon himself, for not openly aiding his co-religionists in Greece, struggling for independence, which the principles of the Holy Alliance forbade. In addition to these troubles, he found his famous compact of kings against people a cause of convulsion in Europe instead of quiet, while there were risings of the peasantry in his own dominions, and a vast conspiracy against the throne was denounced, which had for years escaped the vigilance of the police. Upon the return of the armies from the campaigns in Western Europe several young officers brought back with them liberal ideas; and, in conjunction with some literary civilians, they organised secret political associations in various parts of the empire. It was certainly intended

by the conspirators to change entirely the order of things in Russia, establish representative government, and raise the people from the condition of tame brutes, in their best estate, blindly obeying a barbarising despotism, to the dignity of rational beings under a free constitution. This was the only object meditated and talked of by the literary men when they resolved on extreme measures; and they hoped to get the better subsequently of some of their associates who were strongly suspected of selfish ambition. The inconsistent policy of Alexander immensely strengthened, if it did not originate, the movement, by allowing Araktcheief practically to govern in his name,—a Russian of the old school, who rigorously repressed the intellectual development which his master had previously fostered and promoted in the noblest manner. Though charged with designing to take the life of the emperor, and exterminate the whole house of Romanoff, the project of regicide seems to have been mooted only by a few ambitious braggadocios, while the chief conspirators, in the act of accusation drawn up against them, are admitted to have opposed it. "I will not undertake it," said Yakobovitch. "I have an honest heart, and cannot become an assassin in cold blood." Jukof exclaimed that if the lot fell on him to assassinate the czar, he would commit suicide; and at a meeting held at Kiev, in 1823, the fatal proposition was deliberately overruled. The plot was

denounced by Sherwood, an officer of English origin, in the summer of 1825; but Alexander would have known of it before had he not indolently allowed communications to accumulate in his cabinet, without breaking the seals.

Soon after the disclosure of the plot, but while its details were unknown, the emperor left the capital to sojourn at Taganrog on the Sea of Azof, whither the empress repaired to try the effect of a warmer climate in recruiting her health. He made the long journey with his usual rapidity in twelve days. "Ilya," said he to his coachman on the route, "have you seen the new star? Do you know that a comet always presages misfortune? But God's will be done!" Leaving Taganrog in October, for a tour in the Crimea, he visited Count Woronzow at his magnificent château of Aloupka, where Dr. Robert Lee, the family physician, joined the imperial party at dinner, and heard an extraordinary remark. "The emperor," says he, "expressed how much he was pleased with Orianda, and stated that it was his determination to have a palace built there as expeditiously as possible. To my amazement, he then said, after a pause, 'When I give in my demission I will return and fix myself at Orianda, and wear the costume of the Taurida.' Not a word was uttered when this extraordinary resolution was announced, and I thought that I must have misunderstood the emperor; but this could not be, for in a

short time, when Count Woronzow proposed that the large open flat space of ground to the westward of Orianda should be converted into pleasure-grounds for his majesty, he replied, 'I wish this to be purchased for General Diebitch, as it is right that the chief of my *état major* and I should be neighbours.'" During the night a courier arrived with despatches containing further revelations respecting the conspiracy, upon which Alexander was aroused, and Diebitch was summoned to hold a council.

From Aloupka the emperor proceeded to the valley of Baidar, visited Balaklava, the monastery of St. George, and Sebastopol, returning from thence by way of Eupatoria and Perekop to Taganrog, November 17. He had been ill at intervals during the whole tour, and left the Crimea, suffering from its intermittent fever, which had a fatal termination, December 1. From first to last he refused to take medicine, trusting for recovery to the vigour of his constitution, and perhaps influenced by the predestinarian views he was known to entertain. "My friend," said he to Sir James Wylie, his physician who constantly attended him, "it is the state of my nerves to which you must attend; they are in frightful disorder." "Alas!" rejoined the physician, "that happens more frequently to kings than to ordinary men." "Yes," said the emperor, with animation, "but with me in particular there are many special reasons, and at the present hour more so than ever."

Some days afterwards, when his brain was almost delirious, the czar gazed intently on the doctor, his whole countenance manifesting intense fear. "Oh, my friend," he exclaimed, "what an act, what a horrible act! The monsters! the ungrateful monsters! I designed nothing but their happiness." The empress was kneeling by the bedside of her husband when he expired. Then, rising, she closed his eyes, and with a handkerchief bound up his head to support the lower jaw. After this she folded his hands over his breast, kissed his hand, and knelt down by the dead body for half an hour in prayer. Elizabeth was not destined long to survive Alexander; she died on her way back to St. Petersburg in the following May.

According to the law of succession, the crown devolved to Constantine, the next brother of the late czar. But, upon intelligence of the vacancy reaching St. Petersburg, when the council assembled, the president produced a sealed packet, which Alexander had indorsed as follows: "To be kept by the council of the empire until I order otherwise. In the event of my death this packet to be opened at an extraordinary sitting before proceeding to any other business." Three documents were found in the packet, upon the president breaking the seal. The first was a letter from Constantine to Alexander, dated 1822, in which he voluntarily resigned his right to the crown, upon the plea of general unfitness. The next was a reply from

the emperor accepting the resignation; and the third was an imperial manifesto based upon the acts of resignation and acceptance: — "I. The spontaneous act by which our younger brother, the czarevitch and Grand-Duke Constantine, renounces his right to the throne of all the Russias is, and remains, fixed and irrevocable. The said act of renunciation will be preserved in the great cathedral of the Assumption at Moscow, and in the three administrations of our empire, the holy synod, the council of the empire, and the directing senate, in order to ensure its safety and publicity. II. In consequence of this arrangement, and in conformity with the strict tenor of the act of succession to the throne, we acknowledge our second brother, the Grand-Duke Nicholas, as our heir." The reason assigned for the resignation of Constantine was not the true one. Of all the brothers, he was the only one who resembled his father, the unfortunate Paul. The likeness extended to person and to character. He had the same dark complexion and unsightly physiognomy, while he was just as eccentric, passionate, and brutal, though his impulses were occasionally generous and noble. He was capable of strong and steady affections, extremely devoted to all his relatives, and became romantically attached to a young Polish lady, afterwards created Princess Lowitz, whom he publicly married, and who became his good genius. It was for her sake that he renounced his hereditary rights, as she

was not eligible for the throne of Russia, being a Pole and a Roman Catholic.

Though thus formally appointed to the crown, the Grand-Duke Nicholas would not accept it till Constantine, who was at Warsaw, had confirmed his own act. He then ascended the throne, December 24th, in the thirtieth year of his age, to encounter an insurrection as soon as it was mounted. Though far from being prepared for action, the conspirators determined to avail themselves of the change of sovereignty, and of the uncertainty respecting the succession, to attempt a revolution. Pestal was the military, and the poet Ryleief the civil head of the conspiring party. The former was at Moscow, the latter at St. Petersburg. Almost all who then wore poetic laurels in Russia were among the malcontents, and had been excited to revolt by the increased rigorous censorship of the press. With them were associated many younger members of noble families; and an immense number of military and civilians were also favourable to the constitution of a new Russia, but cautiously waited for some success being achieved before declaring themselves. While clues to the plot were in the hands of the government, only an insurrectionary movement in the south of the empire was expected, till the evening before the oath of allegiance was to be taken by the garrison of St. Petersburg, when Nicholas was informed by letter, that the next day, the 26th, the standard of

revolt would certainly be raised. The night was an anxious one for the imperial family; the guards of the palace were changed, and its outward aspect became that of a citadel. But never was a dangerous enterprise conducted with less discretion. The soldiers who had been won over to the cause of mutiny, about 5000, assembled the next day in the great snow-covered square of the capital, and posted themselves near the statue of its founder; but their superior officers, Trubetskoi and Bulatof, who had instigated them by drink and misrepresentations, kept aloof at the crisis. Ryleief made his appearance in the square; but, finding the military chiefs absent, and seeing the small force of the insurgents, he returned in despair to his house to await his doom.

After some hesitation Nicholas appeared at the head of his guards, supported by a total force of 13,000 troops. Having once decided upon his course, he acted with great resolution, and acquired that domination over his subjects on this eventful day which he ever afterwards retained. Miloradovitch, the governor of St. Petersburg, attempting to address the malcontents, was shot down, while the archbishop and clergy, bearing the cross, were received with insult, upon advising them to return to their duty. No terms were now kept with the mutineers, who were instantly charged; but they defended themselves with great obstinacy, till the roar of artillery terminated the struggle and consigned

them to the silence of death. The number killed was never known, as the dead bodies were immediately collected and thrust into the Neva through holes cut in the ice. These unfortunate men were dupes and victims. Some of them cried "Long live Constantine! the constitution for ever!" and then inquired, "Who is this *Constitutzia?* Is it the wife of the emperor?" Nicholas entered his palace exclaiming, "How sad a commencement of my reign!" and, nearly thirty years later, all Europe reflected, how sad its close! He lived to execute the ukase practically ascribed to him by a foreign noble, "Let there be no mind in Russia — I Nicholas, the czar, so will it;" to wrest territory from Persia and Turkey; draw the boundary line of his empire over the hoary head of Ararat; establish Sebastopol to overawe the south; and look wistfully to the open fiords of the north for a point from whence to intimidate Western Europe. He died with the engines of war recoiling upon the hand that first put them into action, his schemes of ambition fully exposed, his fleet excluded from the waters of the Baltic, his ships popping one by one under the waters of the Euxine, and his vaunted soldiery beat from the field by the ragamuffin Turks whom he despised.

The dungeons of the capital were soon crowded with captive insurgents, who were brought to trial before a special commission, charged with the duty of minutely enquiring into all the circumstances of the

conspiracy. Nicholas himself was occasionally present, and took part in the interrogations. "What had your emperor done to you?" said he, to one of the criminals. "We have not an emperor," was the reply; "we have had two; one was your brother, and the other Araktcheief." "That man," observed the grand-duke Michael, "should have his mouth stopped with a bayonet." "You asked just now," responded the prisoner, "why we wanted a constitution; it was that such things might not be said." To Michael Bestujef, the emperor remarked, "I might pardon you; and if I felt sure of possessing in you a faithful subject I would do so." "Why, sire," replied Bestujef, "that is precisely what we complain of — that the emperor can do anything, and that he is bound by no law. In the name of God, allow justice to have free course, and let the fate of your subjects no longer depend on your caprice or your momentary impressions." To a similar imperial appeal, Count Tchernitchef answered, "I have acted according to my conscience."

The enquiry lingered through five months. At its close, upwards of a hundred of the chief offenders were doomed to rigorous exile and slavery in Siberia; and five of the more capitally compromised, Ryleief, Pestal, Sergius Muravief, Bestujef Rumini, and Kakhofski, were hanged on the glacis of the citadel, July 25. 1826. The execution was a barbarous spectacle, as the condemned were compelled for a whole hour to look on while the preparations were made for their doom; and

owing to the ropes breaking three of them had to be led to death a second time. "Decidedly," said Ryleief, "nothing succeeds with me, not even death." "In this cursed country," exclaimed Muravief, "they don't even know how to hang a man." The poet never flinched from the conspiracy to which he committed himself, though, long before the revolt, he anticipated its failure, the fate of his friends, and his own doom. He clothed in deathless words his tragical apprehensions, in the noble historical poem of Voinarovski; and indulged the prophetic vein, with reference to the autocracy that crushed him, in a passage which has been partially fulfilled: —

"WHAT OUR DREAMS PRESENTED TO US AS A DECREE OF HEAVEN, WAS NOT YET RESOLVED ON HIGH. PATIENCE! LET US WAIT A LITTLE LONGER, TILL THE COLOSSUS HAS FILLED UP THE MEASURE OF OUR WRONGS; TILL, IN HIS HASTE TO GROW STRONG, HE HAS WEAKENED HIMSELF, ENDEAVOURING TO GRASP HALF THE WORLD. LET US ALLOW THAT PROUD HEART TO DISPLAY ITS VANITY IN THE SUN. PATIENCE! THE WRATH OF HEAVEN WILL YET CRUSH HIM TO DUST. IN HISTORY, GOD IS *RETRIBUTION*: HE WILL TAKE CARE THAT THE SEED OF SIN SHALL BEAR ITS FRUIT."

THE END.

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